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" Anything to declare, sir ? "

" No. "

" There's nothing you bought at all ? "

" No. "

" No presents ? "

" No. "

" Nothing at all ? "

" Nothing. Unless . . . "

" Yes, sir — Unless ? "

" Unless you include a head like a rag football dredged from a canal and a taste in my mouth like smoke in a railway tunnel. Our Paris representative entertained me rather lavishly last night."

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for Gin and Lime

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" I wish there was. I'd refuse to pay and then you'd have to confiscate it."

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" This Rose's really kills off hangovers? Have they any in the Station buffet ? "

" Plenty, sir—Hi, sir, come back—you've forgotten your bag."

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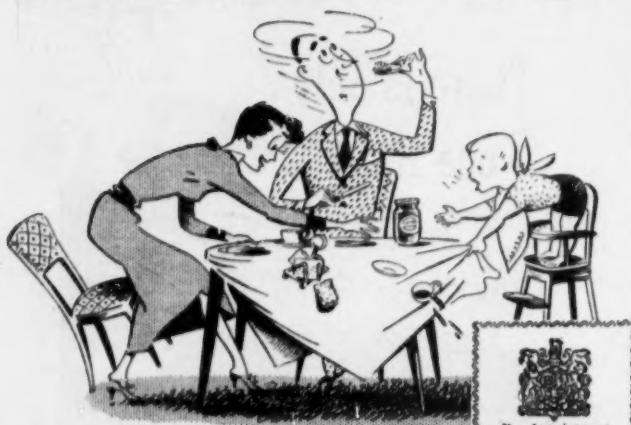


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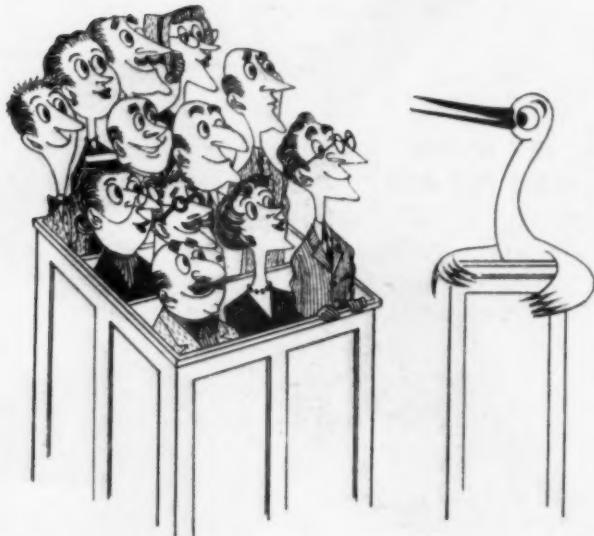
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M-W-63

No settlement out of Stork



Everyone must try it—no bread must be without visible means of Stork! Stork, branded Margarine, will prefer a charge of defamation of character.

The Jury will prefer Stork.

That's because it's a "special" jury consisting of all those who endured 14-unspecial years of "special" margarine. Stork's creamy taste—something truly special—is evidence for Stork as against Stork Margarine. There's a subpoena waiting in your shop. The material facts are the material fats—natural fats, scrupulously selected and skilfully blended to give Stork a wonderful taste.

Now here's the unpalatable bit—this Stork with the creamy taste is really Stork Margarine. Sorry we have to break it to you, but the Law has to insist.

The Law is as concerned with maintaining standards as Stork is with setting them.

The recent Food Standards (Margarine) Order, for example, following the Food Standards Committee, requires all margarines to contain Vitamins A and D.

Stork (Margarine) made them standard in 1934.

Obviously the Law is among the many followers of Stork.

The Law and the Palate beg to differ—

THE LAW CALLS STORK MARGARINE



"WELL DONE, Mr. Watt!"
said his cronies.

Answered James, with
the faintest of grins:
"I'd be more contented,
if what I'd invented was
CURTIS—THE SMOOTHEST OF GINS!"

And being a history student,
You're probably wanting to ask:
"What makes Curtis Gin
so much smoother?"

The answer's—MATURING IN CASK!

CURTIS GIN
Smoother
because it's matured in cask

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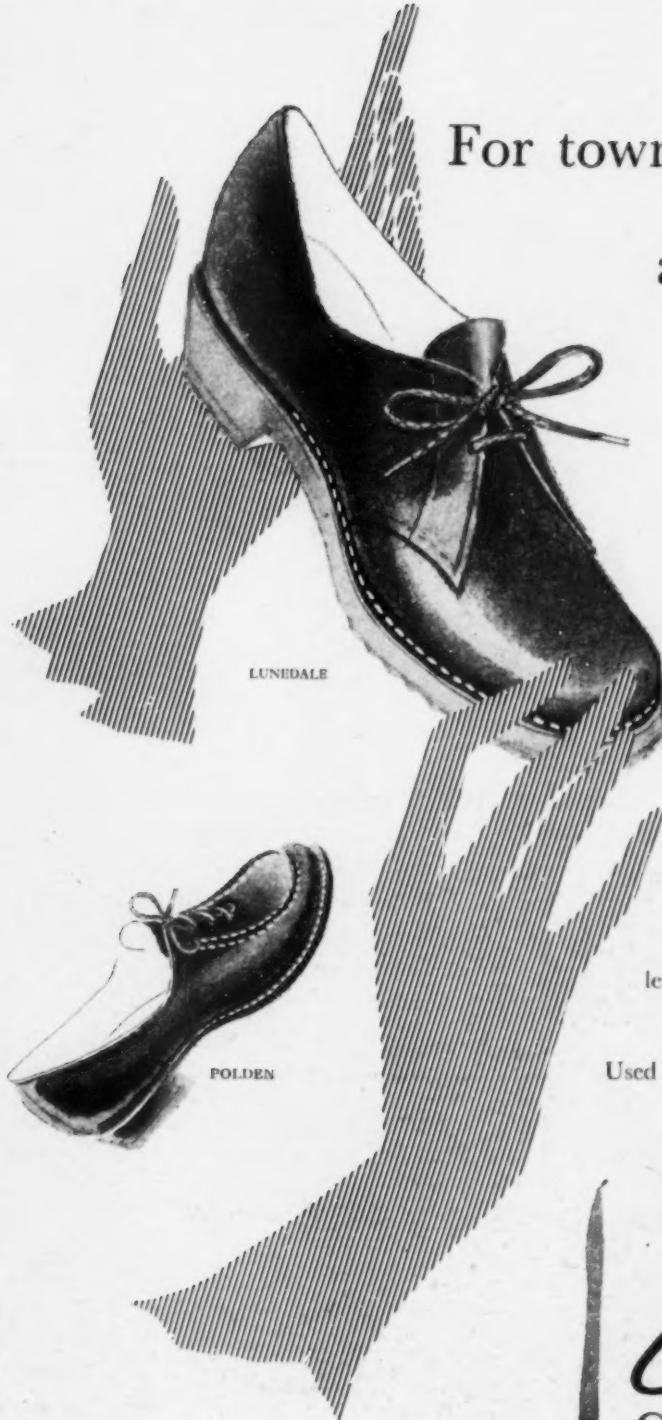
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Lavender which satisfies

the smart woman. It is a charming

economy because it lasts longer



and she loves its supreme

freshness and fragrance

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CHARIVARIA

SYMPATHY will be felt for Viet-Nam's Foreign Minister, Mr. Do, whose chief, Mr. Ngo Diem Dinh, had directed him to obtain, at Geneva, a cease-fire without partition in Indo-China. However, he wasn't the only delegate who had to report: "Nothing but the truce."

Labour-saving Device

ROADS in Leicestershire and Rutland are to be patrolled by policemen in plain clothes, and notices will be erected announcing: "Police in plain clothes



are patrolling this road." Nothing could be more firmly in line with the British tradition of fair play—unless the authorities feel that they could go one better and admit that there aren't any policemen, just the notice.

Froth and Bubble

WRITERS hoping for a contemporary following cannot afford to disregard the idiom of the times, and when Mr. Cyril Connolly says in a Sunday paper that Paris is "bleached and persiled in the heat" his readers will go along with him happily enough. One or two, however, writing on expensively embossed business paper, may point out that they too have a word for the whitest boil.

Research, Please

"ALL the marks of a modern Mata Hari" are ascribed by a gossip-writer to a Miss Luladmi Sergeevna Mikailova, self-styled Russian spy resident in the U.S. "A platinum blonde, and twenty-four . . . she was born in Shanghai and has this exciting Russian name." As the original "Mata Hari" was born in Leeuwarden of Dutch

parents named Zelle, and was a blonde on the wrong side of forty at her most notorious period, the parallel certainly seems pretty exact.

Fickle Jade

No sooner have manufacturers got used to the idea that television is killing carpet sales, because no one needs to look at a carpet in the dark, than the whole picture changes and they are told that carpet sales are rocketing because groups of people sitting round a receiver wear actual holes with their feet—which is undesirable even in the dark. It is very difficult to plan ahead. Especially so when it dawns on the experts that the holes are only worn by impatient, rhythmic stamping during transmission breakdowns, and that this practice will disappear as Lime Grove efficiency improves.

Down to Earth

No one will be surprised to hear that a group of Leningrad scientists, after research into old records, have discovered that a Russian inventor made the first helicopter two hundred years ago. Britain, however, stands by her claim to have originated the ten-foot mooring rope.

Collective Security

SURPRISINGLY little has been heard of the ten-gallon hat presented to the



Prime Minister in Washington. It would have been just the thing to pass round for hard-up Opposition Members.

Time to Pay

JUDGING from the findings of the International Association of Geront-

tology there seems a reasonable possibility of raising the general expectation of life to one hundred years. The news strikes a particularly happy note for a nation already rejoicing over the removal of restrictions on hire purchase agreements.

Saved by the Gong

BY stretching the muscles of the stomach wearers of a new American device can operate a concealed switch in the waistband and illuminate their neckties. This is pleasing, but of no practical value. With the end of rationing the thing might be useful in this country, however, to sound an alarm bell on undue pressure against the abdominal wall.

Lunnon Talk

FARMERS' contributions under the new fertilizer subsidy scheme have been announced by the Ministry of Agriculture, and rural inns are loud with



excited comment on the news that the contribution rate is £2 13s. 6d. a ton for nitro-chalk "provided that this amount shall be increased or decreased by five shillings for each one per centum by weight (and proportionately for any fraction thereof) by which the water-soluble phosphoric acid (P_2O_5) content is above or below eighteen per centum by weight of the fertilizer."

Smile, Please

YOUNG people from Holland, Finland and Denmark are in this country for International Youth Fortnight, and an announcement to the Press says that arrangements can be made for the visitors to "appear in national costume

for the convenience of photographers." It seems a pity that the picturesque is reserved for the cameras in this way, but no doubt it is better than nothing. When the time comes for British lads to go abroad under a reciprocal arrangement they must make a note to pack their Edwardian suits and crêpe-soled suède shoes so that they can offer foreign photographers similar facilities.

Good Show

An announcement by the Ministry of Labour, describing the recently conducted household expenditure inquiry, devotes most of its space to proclaiming the surprising willingness of householders to answer the questions put to them. "A response of this magnitude was wholly unexpected," says the report, and adds that it is "a clear indication of a widespread sense of civic duty." It would be pleasant, in a materialistic age, to subscribe with confidence to this starry-eyed view: on the other hand, the co-operators may simply have hoped that their figures would catch the eye of Mr. Butler.

To the tune of "We Are Fred Karno's Army."

It is reported that the "Daily Express" has passed out of Lord Beaverbrook's control.

*p A GRAND emancipation
Is granted the Express
cresc And all its adult readers
mf (That's one in three, no less).
But if the eager Beaver
Has cast aside the reins,
dim How is it his Crusader
pp Goes daily still in chains?*



TO AN EMINENT AUTOBIOGRAPHER

DEAR LION,—You have decided to write your reminiscences? You will find it an easy and profitable way of spending a few weeks. As you know, anyone can turn out an autobiography: it simply needs fluency and a good contract—and that you will get on your name.

How restful it is, compared with hard work like mastering a Ministerial brief against time or arguing with the Law Lords or preaching before a University, to prattle on about the view from your childhood window and the peculiarities of your first teachers. It can be thousands of words before you move on to a detailed account of life at Eton or Slaghampton Primary School. Do not forget, by the way, the sad, elderly man who first opened your mind to the Pleasures of Great Literature, a revelation reflected in every word you write. Put him in, put in that boy who was such a close friend and with whom you have lost touch, put in at considerably greater length the boy who made nearly as good as you did.

Mysteriously overlapping education come first steps to success, often obscurely described. One minute you are eager and shy and terribly, terribly hurt and the next you are addressing large meetings on Imperial Preference or the Single Tax or Disestablishment. Soon you are being picked out by older men. Leading solicitors send you a brief in a police court rapidly followed by a brief before the Privy Council, the area secretary of your union keeps you behind after a meeting to discuss your ingenious suggestions for improving the effectiveness of your branch, the coming Bishop makes you his Domestic Chaplain.

Then, where the heart of the book should be, there comes a curious blank. You have arrived, but it is the accompaniments of power, not the exercise of it, that you spend your space on. Of course there are a few general comments of no disturbing profundity, but what illusion there is of being behind the scenes will come from the quotation of letters—letters offering you deaneries and ministries and judgeships, letters of congratulation from opponents, letters of resignation in time to avoid unpopular decisions, letters commenting cattily on the tactics of Anglo-Catholics or Modernists or Protestants.

AUTOBIOGRAPHER

There is much more about your Press notices and your social engagements and your collection of famous walking-sticks or first editions or alpine plants. You seem to have unlimited leisure at the top, leisure for strolling round country houses with their gracious owners, for serving as a trustee of national charities, for being the active Chairman of the Athenaeum Committee that looks after members who have fallen on hard times, for being a Governor of your old school, for entertaining visiting foreigners, for collecting anecdotes from explorers and fashionable painters and white-tie surgeons. If you have entered public life upwards from a borough council or trade union headquarters rather than sideways from Pop, there will be a good deal about your visits to the district where you were born and about the surprise of people who did not realize who was talking to them until you revealed the breathtaking truth.

I cannot linger over your account of the lessons that Life has taught you, prominent among them that Truth resides in no one Creed or nostrum. I must hurry on to the chapter that, judging by the space you give it, seems to you the high-spot of the work—your Visit to Canada. Sometimes you go as an ex-Minister filling in the interval before returning to office, sometimes to preach your way across the Dominion, excited by congregations to whom your sermons are new, sometimes to address the Canadian Bar Association, a body that seems to have an insatiable appetite for platitudes. You mention name after name of generous hosts whose hospitality you repay by lack-lustre words of naïve praise for Canada's hospitality, communications and future.

You have come to the end. You and I know that as a writer you are a quack; but some readers of your autobiography will guess from it that as a public man you were a quack too, not imagining that a mind of any genuine distinction could produce so flat-footed and superficial a record. In fact, you were quite a good Minister of Health or Law Lord or Bishop; but on the evidence you provide, can you really blame them for their mistake?

R. G. G. PRICE

RED SURGERY



"Who's next?"

The Jackdaw's Tongue

By CLAUD COCKBURN

DISMISS from your mind right at the outset that thing they always say Dr. Johnson said. The story is a tissue, one may go further and characterize it, without fear of successful rebuttal, as a farrago of half-truths and more or less subtle distortions not untypical, one is sorry to say, of a certain type of that sort of thing.

Freedom of speech is one thing, license another, nor can we tolerate deliberate falsification of the facts of history, which are that Dr. Johnson did not originate that business at all, yet you get ill-informed fanatics going about saying that he said "He who will make a pun will pick my pocket."

Just for a start, the man who did not say that but something like enough to it so that it could be pounced upon and twisted into grist for their mill by unscrupulous propagandists, though we may rely on English common sense to see that in the fulness of Time it recoils upon their own heads, was the dramatist John Dennis, and the person he said it

to, at a time when Johnson was only four years old—so much for the bona fides of certain of these gentry—was musician Henry Purcell.

It is well worth mentioning here that many of his contemporaries thought Dennis was half crazy. Alexander Pope, for one, took that view.

What happened was that Purcell and Dennis went—apparently at Purcell's invitation—into a place to get a drink. It was one of those places where instead of getting your own drink at the bar you sat at a table and a waiter, or—in the parlance of the period—a drawer (this is important), was supposed to come to the table and take your order. There is no record at all of what drink it was that Purcell wanted to order for himself and friend, and the point is entirely irrelevant.

Very much more *à propos* is the fact that although Purcell repeatedly summoned the waiter, or drawer, by tinkling a bell placed on the table by the management for that very purpose, the waiter did not appear.

Purcell examined the table they were sitting at, and ascertained that it was an ordinary table consisting of a flat board supported upon four legs. He was now ready to say something. And what he said, addressing his *vis-à-vis*, was "Why is this tavern like this table?" Dennis said "No, honestly, I give it up." "Because," laughed the whimsical musician, "there is no drawer in it."

Dennis then said "Any man who would make such an execrable pun would not scruple to pick my pocket."

Mark those words "such an execrable." Even Dennis, crazy though he may have been, and soured by not being headed for any high place in the esteem of posterity, did not denigrate puns *per se*—indeed, by implication, he showed a perceptive respect for *per se* puns, no sweeping pun-denouncer he. What he was against were the execrable ones. And Purcell, who, after all, wrote the first English Te Deum ever composed with orchestral accompaniments, would have been the first to admit that



what this pun was was execrable. In fact he actually was the first to admit it, just ahead of the drawer who now came hurrying in with news of the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

One might as well say that because some beer is vile people have to stop drinking altogether, or you get someone trying to abolish the Parliamentary system of Government because look at George lolling there like that on the back benches as though he owned the place.

Hitler never made a pun, he couldn't, and most other Germans can't either.

Taking Aristophanes and many another component of our priceless heritage as read for the moment, the real pioneer so far as our Western civilization is concerned, and it must be a source of very, very real pride to all of us that it was just a perfectly ordinary representative group of lads from this little island of ours that set him off, was Pope Gregory, very rightly yclept The Great. Venerable Bede tells the story well.

You recall the opening line where Archbishop Augustine comes on and Gregory says "Who are those lads you have with you, Archbishop?" And the Archbishop says "Who are these lads I have with me? They're Angli," and Gregory says "Did you say Angli?" and the Archbishop says "That's what I said," and then you get the punch-line "Not Angli but Angeli. (Not Angles but Angels.)" Cutting into the applause with a quick follow-up, Gregory then says "What did you say was the name of that place they come from?" And the Archbishop says "Deira." "Did you say Deira?" "That's what I said." "Well," says Gregory (of course it's even better in Latin). "That country is going to be saved *de ira* (from the anger) of Heaven."

Of course by this time everyone was practically hysterical, but Gregory I wasn't called The Great for nothing, and he said "What was the name of that Chief over there you mentioned?" "They call him Aella." "Did you say Aella?" "That's what I said." "Well in Aella's territory they'll soon be singing Alleluias."

After that there was no turning back and you got Shakespeare and the rest of them, right on up to Court Jester Archy, who said "Little laud to the Devil," and was gaoled for it, nearly a martyr in the



"You remember that man who used to make tractors . . ."

cause of what that same Alexander Pope I referred to earlier was later to describe as paronomasia. (Laud was a pretty typical anti-pun man anyway.)

The fact is, and if you miss this you cannot grasp the whole point of what I'm saying, the popularity of punning is an infallible sign of a great, vigorous flourishing period of literary renaissance, when people are taking the language apart, and tossing it up in the air while thousands cheer, and putting it together again, bigger and better, and they enjoy every minute of it, never had so much fun.

The eighteenth century was fine, simply fine, but it was not like that at all, and in any case it would be a great deal more sensible if people would admit frankly that, as a writer, Addison was no good.

Poor Smollett, living under those conditions, never even heard a good, clean *calembour*, and thus made himself ridiculous by speaking of the "vague

conundrum and the prurient pun," which nobody was even talking about until he brought it up. He said afterwards he had got confused about the meaning of *double entendre*.

Even anti-pun A. Pope admitted that in a pun a "word, like the tongue of a jackdaw, speaks twice as much by being split." What more could one ask, may one ask? Instead of which, after a good recovery in the early and mid-nineteenth century, you get that ghastly period in which, whenever a cheap fiction writer has one of his characters make a pun, he has another character say "Ouch," or even "Throw a cushion at him, somebody."

However, a glance at what word-man Rudyard Kipling referred to as "that newspaper Pere Lachaise, the office files," shows pun-men battling on underground, laying the foundations of James Joyce and also that scene where Mrs. Thingummy says to Groucho "My, you're shy!" and Groucho says

"Naturally I'm shy, I'm a shyster lawyer."

And I do therefore feel that at a time like this our thoughts should turn to a man now living in northern New Jersey, U.S.A. He is a fellow I know. And his attitude was that if a man is ever going to amount to anything, he is not going to wait about until someone comes up and hands him a pun-opportunity on a platter, he is going to get in there and create situations where puns can be.

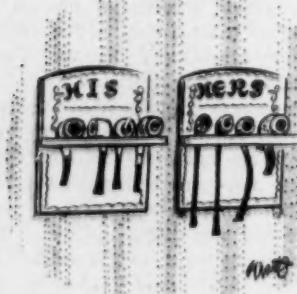
As, for instance, he pointed out to me once that if you had a land-locked harbour (although, of course, he called it "harbor"), very safe and secure, and into it there came a sailing ship in absolutely wretched condition, leaks all over and the rats striking out for the shore, it would be possible to state that "the bark was worse than the bight."

He was a Harvard man, who later became financial correspondent of a well-known newspaper, and he remarked that it was not unreasonable to assume that the mother of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, had two sisters who ran a café or restaurant where they served delicious home-made pies. So on the wall of the restaurant, or just inside the window—the point is strictly speaking irrelevant—they hung up a menu or tariff, showing what all these confections cost.

In such a case one would legitimately be in a position to describe this card, or menu, as proclaiming "the pie-rates of Penn's aunts."

Or if the Cheshire Cat had been a female deer, one could easily have said something to the effect that "the gone doe leers."

In the end he contracted a chill and a high fever, and they wrapped him in blankets, but had to unwrap him again when they saw that what he aimed to do was pass away and give people a chance to report that he died in the wool.



"The Georgian Boys"

(To be sung on Architectural Outings to the tune of "The Cornish Floral Dance")

AS I walked home the other night
there was a sign in black-and-white:
"Pulled down by the L.C.C.
This Georgian house will have to be
for Flats in Kentish Town!"

And soon I could only stand and stare
for the whole of the Georgian Group was there!
In and out of each room they went
Peers and Poets—all intent
on saving that house for Kentish Town.

Chorus: And I thought I could hear the peculiar tones
of the Abercrombies and Richardsons
Methuen, Lees-Milne, Summerson
(and the Grand old Duke of Wellington)
Each one eager to have a snoop.
All together in the Georgian Group!

Peering here, sneering there. Viewing houses everywhere.
Did anyone see such a cultured troupe
All together in the Georgian Group?

Cresc: Betjeman thought the style debased
but Summerson called it in perfect taste
The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres
exclaimed: "It's an early work of Barry's!"
J. M. Richards cried: "Put your shirt on
a bet it was built by Decimus Burton."
Pevsner remarked: "If you'd care to look
it's already in my Penguinbook!"

dim. Whether they knew their stuff, I care not
Whether they'd read it up, I know not!
ff. For they stopped that house from tumbling down!

Chorus: For who could resist the furious tones
of the Abercrombies and Richardsons,
Summerson, Pevsner and Betjeman
(and the Grand old Duke of Wellington)?
Who to a vandal's act could stoop
when faced with the wrath of the Georgian Group?

Jaunting here, jaunting there; saving houses everywhere!
Touring round in a high-toned troupe;
Hurrah for the Gorgeous Georgian Group!

P. E. C.



"Now just take Father up his tea."

Bowler Hat and Bells

By RICHARD BENNETT


LOOKING back, it is at first painful for me as an old Public Official to account for the return of the Court Jester or Public Fool to English life. This neglected subject now deserves, however, more than a footnote to the history of the times.

The movement undauntedly began with the Era of Assaults. This Era of Assaults, which lasted for over a decade, is so named because in it thousands of savage and supposedly senseless attacks were made on respectable gentlemen, many of them, as it happened, functionaries of public and semi-public bodies.* The authorities, at first, so misjudged the character of these apparently unorganized outbursts of in-

* Britain was, even at this early period, governed by an Officialdom—of sorts. There was, also, for a time, an elected body called "Parliament." Scholars differ about its functions, but agree that it was, in no sense, a government as the term is generally understood.

dividual rage that they issued all their officials above a certain grade with a specially designed lapel button. They thought, thereby, to distinguish their officers from other men of similar appearance, and thus secure them respect and immunity from attack.

At what date officials had to be escorted to and from their work under protective guard is not certain. But it must have been either a little before, or a little after, Dr. Eckhardt Weissblatt's historic paper "Narrismus and the release of socio-dynamic tension," which he read at an international sociological summer school at Dawlish.

Briefly his argument was that the arrogance and indifference of officials was causing neurotic disorder and mental breakdown to an extent that threatened social stability. He was also able to show a significant correlation between the incidence of certain physical ailments and epidemics and certain forms of bureaucratic action or inaction. In an earlier period, he said, Court

Fools and Jesters had tempered the severity of autocracies—had introduced the necessary elasticity into a rigid system. The Fool could speak home truths, and remind the proud and presumptuous that life is short and we are brothers under the skin. In a general sense, he could speak for the subject to the ruler. He cited the case of one Tarleton, Court Jester to Queen Elizabeth (the first, presumably, as he was speaking in the reign of the second). This man was recorded as being able to "undumpish her at his pleasure. He told the Queen more of her faults than most of her chaplains, and cured her melancholy better than her physicians." Who, Dr. Weissblatt asked, could undumpish the Chairman of the Coal Board (apparently one of the most oppressive of the public bodies of the day), or tell him his faults effectively, if not a Coal Board Fool?

He proposed, therefore, that accredited salaried Fools should be appointed to all Ministries, Boards, Authorities and Executives. Humour was the most effective release of tension. The Fools, going where they liked, saying what they liked to whom they liked, would be an invaluable safety valve for the discontents simmering below the surface of social life.

There is little doubt that *The Times* was largely responsible for the introduction of the Fool. Many prominent men and women engaged in a very lengthy correspondence, of no interest now except in its result. The consensus of opinion was that something should be done, in a limited way, and not too soon.

The destruction of records has been too thorough for us to say with certainty when or where the first Public Fool was appointed. We know that their official uniform was "a suit of loud checked plus-fours." There is unhappily no pictorial record of this garment. We also know that among the first was the Coal Board Fool.

Most of the first Fools were out-of-work actors and comedians. But later men from all walks of life were attracted to the career and shone in it. One of the supernumerary Treasury Fools, for example, was probably the author of a lost book of satiric verse called



"But, my dear chap, you don't need higher wages now that hire purchase has been freed from restriction."



The Bab Ballads. A part of the name is the same.

From the first, many large industrial and commercial undertakings recruited a better type of Fool from the Universities. These young men were usually styled "Gentlemen Joculators" to distinguish them from the Public Fools. But the rôles were interchangeable. Many an old Fool could, for example, supplement his pension from public service with a couple of joculatorships.

From oral tradition we learn that Fools were allowed a minimum of ten minutes, at any time of the day or night with any member of the organization to which they were accredited: that they replaced at the same salaries officials known as Public Relations Officers. Many of these, it should be added, were found to be natural Fools. No high official could make any speech in any public place, on the radio, or the television, without being accompanied by his Fool. Nor could an official write to

The Times without a postscript added by his Fool, if he were so inclined.

The old discords have died down, and we can now admit that the Fools made the administration both more humane and more efficient. Gradually it became clear to Public Servants that they were, in fact—servants. Many of them, when forced to realize this for the first time, committed suicide or died of shock.

It would be pleasant to record that the Fools, who achieved this beneficent result, were worthy of respect. But generally they appear to have been vain, intemperate, capricious, and irresponsible persons. It is true that, in spite of these imperfections, they were, in fact, if not in name, the government of the country for those decades known now as "The Age of Folly."

Even in this light, the Massacre of the Fools, as it is popularly called, does not make a pretty story. We may regret the excesses of the Elimination of Folly

campaign, of which it was a part. The destruction of records, undoubtedly, went too far in unskilled hands. But the movement itself was historically necessary. Without it the New Reformed Officialdom could not have taken over the administration of the country.

It is useless, as many still do, to dwell on the inevitable distresses of the transition period. The N.R.O. has absorbed all that was good in the Age of Folly. The Fools, martyrs if you like, did not die in vain. Their ideas live on. That is why, to-day, we have our five official Merry Days, when the Five Official Jokes are relayed to factory, office and home for our amusement. Humour still has its established place in our lives.

“TEST FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS.

FORM OF BEETHOVEN.”

Heading from The Times

Da-da-da-DA! Da-da-da-DA?

Modern Types

Aunt Mattie

By GEOFFREY GORER

PRACTICALLY the only people who do not habitually refer to Miss Bruce as "Aunt Mattie" are her nephews and niece. They seldom refer to her at all; when they do they usually speak of "old Em." When they were small children during the first world war they lived at the Big House and were chiefly looked after by Miss Bruce, and it was from those circumstances and that period that the considerable staff and the villagers took to referring to her as "Aunt Mattie," using the children's constant phrase. When Miss Bruce's brothers were demobilized the children returned to them, only coming back to the Big House for occasional visits. As they grew up they discarded the title "Aunt" as being too formal and old-fashioned, and first called her Mattie; subsequently this was abbreviated to "Em." A little before Christmas they send a small gift "To, dearest Em" finding it hard to think of anything which will please her; the remainder of the year they only give her an occasional thought.

Whatever the gifts they choose, no matter how shoddy or how impractical, Aunt Mattie is always delighted with them, and, during the first weeks of the New Year, will actually take a few minutes off during daylight hours to show any chance visitor to the Big House the presents the "dear children" have sent her. She always refers to her nephews and niece as "children" though they have now married and have children of their own. But she has never seen her great-nephews and great-nieces because they live quite a distance away and she could never leave her work for even the shortest period. She sometimes wonders why the dear children never propose themselves for a visit. She doesn't like to ask them because the Big House is now really rather uncomfortable with only her and Old Nannie to run it, and Grandpa almost completely bed-ridden and no money for replacements and repairs;

but nothing would make her happier than for them to come of their own accord. Until they do so, or at least send photographs, Aunt Mattie will find it difficult to realize that there is another generation of dear children in the family.



This lack of realization is not due to Aunt Mattie being exceptionally stupid, but rather to her being exceptionally overworked, so preoccupied with day-to-day cares and an unending succession of almost insoluble problems that she has neither leisure nor energy even to think of subjects or people outside her immediate domain. She is trying, almost single-handed, to do the work which, when she was first given her nickname, was performed by a score or more domestic servants, gardeners, a chauffeur, a bailiff and agricultural workers. She is trying to keep the Big

House, the gardens and the home farm running in some sort of order so that it will be in a fit state for the dear children to inherit when her dear Father passes on.

It is of course a quite hopeless battle in which she is so selflessly dissipating all her forces. The Big House was last modernized in the 1890s, when Aunt Mattie's father inherited it; even though most of the rooms are shut up, the inconvenient domestic arrangements with their numerous "offices" and long corridors demand a staff of servants for efficient functioning. It would cost a packet just to bring the water from the scullery to one of the many rooms in the front part of the house. Although old Mr. Bruce subsists on invalid food, and Aunt Mattie and Old Nannie live chiefly on bread and cheese, eggs and tea, Aunt Mattie must walk the better part of a mile every day inside the house.

By working every available daylight hour in every sort of weather, with some untrained help from a couple of rather "simple" men, and quite a lot of "lent" hands in summer evenings and weekends from men and women of the

village who have a traditional affection, somewhat masked by kindly ridicule, for Aunt Mattie and all the Bruces, she manages to prevent the gardens and home farm from becoming completely abandoned and wild. The lawns house poultry, the former flower borders grow vegetables, the shrubberies are kept in quite decent order (though there is no replanting) and the depleted fields support a rather scruffy dairy herd and their followers.

Apart from good Wellingtons, Aunt Mattie spends hardly anything on her own clothes, and generally looks rather like a scarecrow, with garments adapted and re-adapted by Old Nannie, who, poor dear, is getting rather blind and clumsy with her needle. Aunt Mattie is thin and scrawny, with a raddled complexion, and calloused hands. It is hard to believe she was once considered one of the beauties of the county.

Her fiancé was killed in 1914; her mother died shortly after; and she surmounted her personal grief by devoting herself to the care of her widowed father and the nephews and niece left in her charge. As the years passed and money grew increasingly scarce she became somewhat irrationally obsessed by the apparent necessity of keeping the old place going for future Bruces to live in when her father dies. She plans then to move into one of the cottages; she has already chosen one.

Of course no future Bruce ever will live there. When the dear children refer to the Big House they sometimes wonder if "that great barn of a place" could possibly be sold as a school, or a nursing home, or perhaps a government office; it will be advertised as "eminently suitable for institutional purposes." Luckily Aunt Mattie does not suspect this; did she guess that her life's devotion was wasted, as far as the future heirs are concerned, she would probably become quite potty, instead of merely being, in the words of the villagers, "just a little cracked."



"Boy finds dagger made in 1546 n.c."
Headline in Daily Express
And the month?

Habiba and the Egg

By ANTHONY CARSON

WE were in the holy city of Fez, just past the gate of Boujeloud, at the beginning of the cedar-spiced, tinkling Medina, veined with alleyways and glowing with mosques. Mr. Jones and I sipped mint-tea and watched five centuries roll back. A water-seller, hung with copper cups, rang his bell and cried down the ages while a cavalcade of shrouded horsemen cleaved the crowds who sipped at the tiny glittering shops. A group of women, like a flight of grey moths, hurried by from secrecy to secrecy, and beggars sang for alms in the caves of their blindness. Mr. Jones and I had met in a small cargo ship which had sailed from Tower Bridge. By ferry-boat, liner and

bus, via Casablanca, we had arrived here, and were staying in a neat, clean Jewish hotel called the Cosmos up in the New Town. Mr. Jones was an elderly man from Lancashire who had retired from clock-making and now intended to devote the rest of his life to conjuring.

"So here we are," said Mr. Jones, polishing his spectacles, "and it's like being in the Bible. But give me the market places every time. You can pick up a trick or two there. That's the thing about conjuring. It's a universal language whether you're with Hottentots or Negroes or Eskimos. You writers are conjurers too, but your symbols are too damned complicated. Don't you envy me?" "As a matter of

fact I do," I said. I always wish I played the guitar, sang, juggled or drew lightning sketches. "But you must have worked hard enough on your universal language?" Jones smiled complacently. "Ever since I was six," he said. "Even then I hated clocks. You've no idea how much I've hated clocks for fifty odd years. They've made me look different from what I am. Dried up, trying to burst out of myself. But that's another matter. Yes, I started on the usual kid's stuff of course. Imitation ink-drops, jumping crockery and button-holes which squirted at you. As I grew older I bought books on the subject and practised sleight-of-hand with coins. Then cards. Then handkerchiefs and



"That chair hasn't been swept under for days."

so on. When I was a mere lad of sixteen I could have held my own on the halls. But it was not to be." He looked gloomily into his mint-tea. "Clocks. Clocks. Clocks. For all those wasted years. As a matter of fact I did very well. Ask about —— Jones in Bolton and they will tell you. But once an artist always an artist, eh, and it was in my blood. It only had an outlet every Saturday at the Rotary Club, or the Clockmakers' Temperance Society Guild —not that I am a teetotaller—I used to perform at the Queen's Arms every alternate Friday night until I married. . . . And here I am, a real conjurer for the first time in my life." I looked hard at Mr. Jones and thought how utterly unlike a conjurer he looked; he hadn't the stigmata of adventure, a single veil of mystery to hide his square, precise face and Midlands jaw. "Well, I'm off to the market place. There's bound to be one somewhere round here. Crowds, confidence tricks, Spot the Lady, they're all the same all over the world. Come on."

We set off for the Boujeloud gate, got

lost, and eventually found ourselves on a bit of waste land swarming with Arabs in djellabahs and fezzes. They were surrounding entertainers, tumblers, fortune-tellers, story-tellers and holy men selling bits of the Koran sewn up in leather to cure warts, heartburn and loss of virility. A remarkable Berber orchestra of drums, cymbals, and sweet-toned bells punctuated a harsh Saharan chant, led by a black-faced singer who preached the menacing message.

An enormous change had come over Jones. He threaded about the fair-ground explaining confidence tricks, how stooges were placed, betting techniques and run-away men. "Just the same as Bolton fair-ground on Bank holiday," he said excitedly. We stopped to watch a comedian and immediately became, ourselves, the centre of attention. With insolent, ragged politeness the Berber approached us, making a low bow, and invited us to enter the arena. "Go on," I said to Jones. "Here's your first foreign audience." "Very well," he replied briskly, "you can take round the hat." He strode into

the centre of the ring, a figure of astonishing assurance, and bowed genially in all directions. It was, I could sense, the well-rehearsed face for the Clockmakers' Temperance Society Guild, good clean fun and a wink for the ladies. He held out his arms, waved them, and produced a billiards ball, then two, then three, and then four. He threw them into the air and they changed into a bunch of paper flowers. There was an immediate ovation, and nearly everybody began laughing at the comedian. I went around with the Berber's tin basin and collected twenty francs, six buttons and a used bus ticket. Jones, however, was delighted. "You see," he said, "complete communication. You may be clever, Carson, but could you do that?"

We returned to the hotel in the New Town where we were living. It was clean, neat and Jewish. The proprietor was a minute man who constantly wore an enormous hat, and who hated the Arabs to such an extent that he referred to the entire intricate treasure-house of old Fez as the "native quarter." "What, mixing with the natives again?" he would shout, waving his hand towards passing Arab scholars, saints, lawyers, beggars and martyrs. But the hotel was pleasant and possessed a café-bar where Mr. Jones could practice what he called his "four-ale stuff." This consisted of tricks he had mostly purchased in the shady quarters of Marseilles, dubious packs of cards, a Rabelaisian variation of Spot the Lady, and various ingenious quirks to relax the drinking business man. Also there was a pleasant domestic staff of Berber girls, one of whom was called Habiba. She looked after us in the annexe of our hotel.

Habiba was about twenty-five, with a golden smile radiating from her heart and several gold teeth (of which all Arabs and Berbers are inordinately proud). By day she wore hectically vivid clothes, a walking bundle of orange, crimson, vermillion, turquoise and emerald. At night she became utterly mysterious like all the good women of Fez, and minced through the hotel in a djellabah, veiled up to her pretty eyes. But even then happiness and mischief bubbled up inside her, and she used to hang about at the door of the hotel, giggling at me. Since I never knew who she was, I never knew how to behave. A tourist pamphlet I had





"Don't play about with your food."

received in Rabat warned me "Grave consequences may ensue if the foreigner attempts to become familiar with veiled ladies!" However, Habiba always gave herself away in the end and all was well. From the very first day we arrived in Fez she had been fascinated by Mr. Jones. Jones and I shared the same room, and in the morning she used to bounce in, in her rainbow livery, and sit on one of our beds, staring at him.

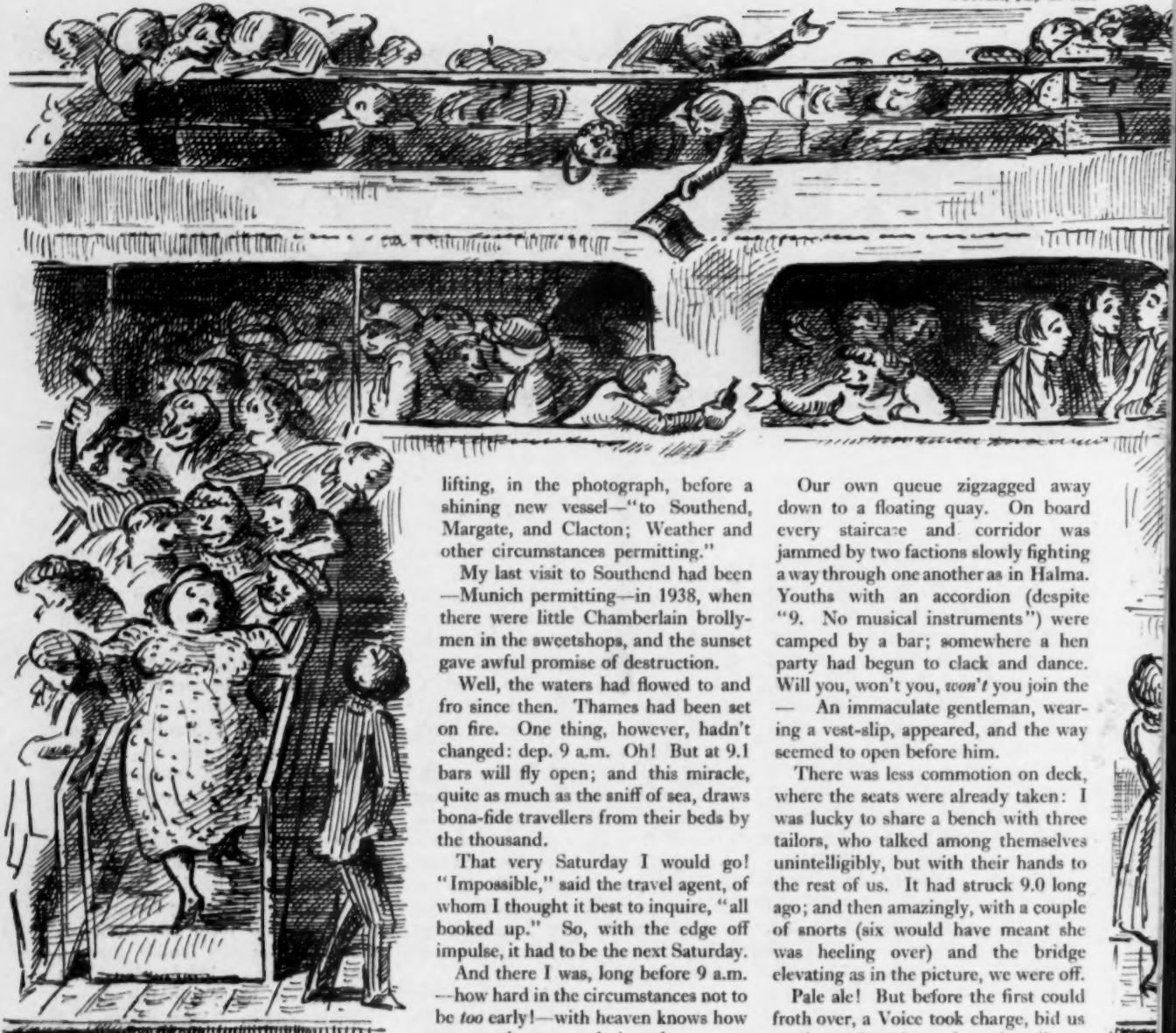
"Why have you all those objects all over the place?" she asked him in French. "Because I am a conjurer," he replied with an atrocious accent he had attempted to perfect by means of a gramophone. "What is that?" she asked. "A sort of magician," he said. "But you haven't got the evil face of a magician," said Habiba. "Magicians needn't have evil faces," said Mr. Jones patiently. Habiba stared at him unbelievingly. "I don't think you are a magician. You are too white to be a magician. Somewhere you have a house?" Mr. Jones raised his eyebrows. "What has a house got to do with it?" "Magicians do not have houses," said Habiba authoritatively. Then she left our room and went next door, causing screams of laughter and crashing furniture. All the other Berber maids came running along, followed by the fat supervisor, and everyone was shouting and explaining and enjoying themselves. Habiba was a hard, uncomplaining worker, but she went hand-in-hand with anarchy.

Two nights later Mr. Jones was giving a four-ale performance in the hotel café-bar. It was a great success. He had started conventionally enough, and then the cunning cosy look of the Queen's Arms had slipped into his face, and out came the Marselles collection. It was an easy triumph. In England, although the people possess a basic honest bawdiness, you have to be careful with the mad Puritan streak. Here there was no resistance. The tiny patron, who had had a stuffed rabbit removed from his enormous hat, was so overjoyed with the performance that he hired Jones there and then as resident magician and reduced our rent. "You see what I mean about communication," said Jones. "It's all so fundamentally simple."

I, in my turn, started to learn Arabic and had short lessons from Habiba. In a few days I could say "Good morning," "Good evening," "Thank you," "Good-bye," and "How are you?" This seemed as good as any way to begin learning the language. The other alternative was to study Koranic Arabic by means of learning the written alphabet and a series of classical Arabic words which hardly anybody used in Morocco. And this method took at least ten years. The only constructive result would be one's ability to read the soft-drink advertisements. As it was, I made quite a bit of progress, and was delighted to carry on an elementary conversation with Habiba in Arabic

whenever Mr. Jones was in the room. "You see," I said, "there are other means of communication than drawing flags out of people's ears. Quite apart from other obvious ones." "Ah yes," said Mr. Jones, "that may be the case. But wait till Habiba sees some of my tricks."

The next day I heard a scream, followed by running footsteps. Habiba was racing across the courtyard of the annexe, followed by Mr. Jones. "Stop! Stop!" he cried in his appalling French. "Everything is all right." She had been cornered by the steps leading up to the main part of the hotel. "Leave me alone," she cried, waving her arms. I walked over to them and stood by, undecided. It was frankly the last thing I had expected of Mr. Jones, but anything can happen in this climate and this altitude. "What's wrong?" I asked weakly. The patron also arrived with his wife, his wife's brother, two children, three guests (among whom was a policeman) and all the waiters. "What's happening?" the patron asked me, squashing his managerial hat down over his ears. "I don't know," I replied. "He swallowed three eggs," cried Habiba, pointing at Mr. Jones accusingly. "I saw him do it when I came to make up the beds. He made the most awful faces, and I asked him if he was ill. He looked for the eggs and eventually he found them." She flung out her arms. "How could I have swallowed them?"



T began in the east wind, with a sandwich-board man—one of those forlorn heralds who apprise us of Doom, Furs, or the new Pakistani restaurant round the corner—handing me a leaflet; this I at once pocketed; my coat went to the cleaner's, and out of it came various shop receipts, a farthing, an unknown button and the forgotten leaflet.

"Eagle Steamers!" I read, smoothing it out: "Day Cruises to the Sea from Tower Pier"—drawbridges

lifting, in the photograph, before a shining new vessel—"to Southend, Margate, and Clacton; Weather and other circumstances permitting."

My last visit to Southend had been—Munich permitting—in 1938, when there were little Chamberlain brolly-men in the sweetshops, and the sunset gave awful promise of destruction.

Well, the waters had flowed to and fro since then. Thames had been set on fire. One thing, however, hadn't changed: dep. 9 a.m. Oh! But at 9.1 bars will fly open; and this miracle, quite as much as the sniff of sea, draws bona-fide travellers from their beds by the thousand.

That very Saturday I would go! "Impossible," said the travel agent, of whom I thought it best to inquire, "all booked up." So, with the edge off impulse, it had to be the next Saturday.

And there I was, long before 9 a.m.—how hard in the circumstances not to be *too* early!—with heaven knows how many others, wandering down over the cobbles, squeezing between parked charabancs, dodging cars and kiosks, linked arms, fish-porters looking like damp peons. A taxi or two. Fat woman pleading with officials for her fat pug. But what says No. 6 of Important Notes? "No dogs are carried." Damning the universe, a great dray drawn by chestnuts charged uphill under the lowering sky.

"You can just as well get wet here," said the beefeater to his small attendance for the Children's Beach.

Our own queue zigzagged away down to a floating quay. On board every staircase and corridor was jammed by two factions slowly fighting a way through one another as in *Halma*. Youths with an accordion (despite "9. No musical instruments") were camped by a bar; somewhere a hen party had begun to clack and dance. Will you, won't you, *won't* you join the

— An immaculate gentleman, wearing a vest-slip, appeared, and the way seemed to open before him.

There was less commotion on deck, where the seats were already taken: I was lucky to share a bench with three tailors, who talked among themselves unintelligibly, but with their hands to the rest of us. It had struck 9.0 long ago; and then amazingly, with a couple of snorts (six would have meant she was heeling over) and the bridge elevating as in the picture, we were off.

Pale ale! But before the first could froth over, a Voice took charge, bid us good morning (shrugs from the tailors), embraced the riverscape, called on Mr. Boyle's party to proceed to the forward dining saloon for breakfast, coughed, and put on a gramophone record.

"My Baby Loves Me," as Greenwich, noble and deserted, slid into view, followed by Woolwich, Erith and Silvertown—all seemingly stricken by the explosion of the last—and so past the maiden liner *Ostrava* and a cluster of sail barges to long bare river walls broken by an occasional village or

Southend Fling

DIZ

factory. Here Good Queen Bess yelled "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman," there pylons out-topped St. Paul's Cathedral.

We didn't miss much, and it all had a Stygian charm, enhanced by the atmospheric blight that seemed endemic.

To the throb of the engines, breakfast followed breakfast (but where, now, were the *remaining* members of Mr. Boyle's party?), beer chased beer, and the crowd had begun to get the measure of itself. We were gay in spots. We drank from bottles, and surreptitiously felt for sandwiches: spectators of fun rather than fun ourselves; two thousand of us from the Home Counties, as it might be at the Ideal Home Exhibition or panto on ice.

The river spread out, losing the Kent coast, and in a haze we were touched by the blank surmise of *Outward Bound*. Hours late, should we ever see Southend? Bottles flew overboard. A chorus welled up: "Mother Brown," followed surprisingly by "O come all ye faithful." Two teddy-boys waffled past, short of stature and trouser, but long-coated and long-haired. A gimlet of a woman, with tiny grey topper askew, danced a jig. The immaculate gentleman was seen on the captain's bridge, raising binoculars: a waiter ran up to him, and he drank off what could only be—the gesture asserted—a stiff whisky.

Then the end of the mile-long pier loomed ahead, and we all started

shoving our way downstairs. When we emerged it was a new, blue-and-white day.

Southend is a fun-fair and a parade for the paper-hatted—with sombreros, bobby's helmets, and jockey's caps much fancied—and the crawl to and fro along the pier and a bobbing of boats and a mud-flattery and cockles and giggly postcards and open-top buses and "Torture through the Ages" and the tide bringing back the ice-cream cartons, and four hours of it was just enough.

The boat might be late (and was, by an hour), but not so the gangs, the families, the coach parties and the couples, swarming back to make their long, long queue.

The immaculate stranger watched our embarkation with the interest of one who has done the full trip to Margate, Clacton, and the open sea, and perhaps availed himself of the telephone service on board (10/6 to any part of the British Isles). A glass of whisky in hand bespoke continuity.

Cheerier all round was the way home, with circles growing and voices raised in song *against* the loudspeaker, "My Darling Clementine," "Mademoiselle from Armentees," and "Don't have any more, Mrs. More"—all those female old contemptibles who assail the Cockney at dusk. Beer and stout flowed; high tea (up to 9/6, with lobster) tempted some, gin others; silhouettes brought the shore near; lights wriggled; we were tired, but it



was a tiredness sweetly drawn out. All the time I couldn't help feeling I had lost something—pocket book, pen, key-ring . . . myself . . .

It was dark and quiet when we glided again under the upraised bridge to find—oh so unreal, unexpected and beautiful!—the Tower lit up; and rather sadly, as the decks were being swept of our rubbish, the bottles piled, we melted away in the gloom of a hill famous for execution and riot.

G. W. STONIER

How to Make Surgery Pay

By RICHARD GORDON

OLD Blood and Thunder, the forthright frock-coated man who taught me surgery, was once pressed at short notice to take over a lecture on *The Ethics of the Relationship Between the Doctor and his Patients*. The subject clearly puzzled him. He was like a squire committed to speak on the ethical relationship between the sportsman and his partridges. "Gentlemen," he declared, gripping the lectern firmly, "I have only two pieces of advice to give you. First—remember that major surgery means minor gratitude. Save the patient's life, and he'll complain his stitches tickle, the nurses have cold hands, there are breadcrumbs in his bed, and your bill's outrageous. But tidy up his hammer toes and hernias, and he'll be your devoted slave for life.

"Second—you hear a lot of damn nonsense at meetings about letting your patients know what's wrong with 'em and what you're going to do about it. Fiddlesticks! Take my advice, gentlemen. Cut it out and tell 'em nothing." He then went on to give an enthusiastic lecture on the surgical pathology of the kidney.

As Blood and Thunder often turned purple over his morning *Times*, I wonder how his blood pressure would have responded to the cases that now make the Law Reports read like columns from the *Lancet*. No patient dared think of suing Blood and Thunder—he made his mistakes, but his attitude at the bedside automatically turned them into Acts of God. If a nervous patient asked at the end of one of his graphic clinical demonstrations "What's wrong with me, doctor?" Blood and Thunder slapped a hand on his shoulder and boomed "You leave all that to me, laddie!"—which immediately made his victim feel better. All that patients in his wards learned of their forthcoming treatment was that they would be operated upon on a Friday; several thousands of them must have passed through his hands with no more idea of their disease and what had been done for it than the dazed survivors of a severe accident.

But the modern patient knows his rights. Old Blood and Thunder could have left his umbrella inside and got away with it; if a man wakes up to-day

from a major operation with a safety-pin sticking in him, he's off to Lincoln's Inn as soon as he can walk. He's only to cough over the jury and limp into the witness box and the Court has awarded £10,000 damages against the surgeons, who seem to have ousted the daily papers as the regular supporters of litigants.

The medical profession could easily cure this forensic fever by applying its first principle of therapeutics—that prevention is better than cure. This is

clearly how a surgeon should take a ward-round with his students in a modern hospital:

"Now, gentlemen, we come to this lady, Mrs. Smith. I have made a diagnosis of chronic tonsillitis, and explained to her with coloured drawings all the complications of the operation of tonsillectomy mentioned in *The Encyclopaedia of Surgical Practice*. We must now decide whether to operate or not, and I shall therefore hand over the case as usual to my learned friend."

Adjusting his freshly-sterilized wig and gown, the hospital's senior Q.C. approaches the bedside.

"There are two tonsils, are there not?" he demands of the surgeon.

"Yes, two."

"Both would be removed in the operation of tonsillectomy, would they not?"

"That is correct."

"I put it to you, that part of either tonsil might well be left behind at the operation?"

"Oh, a microscopic fragment—"

"Answer yes or no."

"Yes."

"This fragment might possibly grow into another tonsil, might it not?" (No answer.) "In my opinion operation is contra-indicated."

"There you are," the surgeon says cheerfully to the patient. "I know you'll have a beastly sore throat for the rest of your life and probably choke to death, but that's all we can do for you. Good afternoon."

The alternative is to start suing the patients if they don't get better. Or let them hear another of Blood and Thunder's surgical maxims—"If you do make a mistake, gentlemen, make a damn big one. It's the little ones that mean law courts. It's really very much cheaper to knock 'em off."

• •

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"Will the man who lost a large sum of money by investment please contact the Building Society, where he will learn that investment can be absolutely safe and very profitable."

Advertisement in the Daily Telegraph





The Invisible Complex

By MICHAEL PADEV

Being further extracts from the Memoirs of Arthur Kestler

THIS book is dedicated to Dora, the woman who became, for a short time, my fourth wife. Though divorced now for more than twenty years Dora and I are very good friends. The same, incidentally, is true of all the other women in my life. I met Dora in the 'thirties in Paris. She was as poor as I was. We lived in a haystack on an empty site near one of the Terminus stations of the Métro. We never had more than one decent meal per month, but we were very healthy and very satisfied with life.

One summer Dora and I visited some rich friends in Switzerland for the purpose of having a free holiday. But we could not afford to travel on separate passports. Dora calculated that it would be cheaper if we had one passport. For this reason we got married. But I soon found out that I could reconcile my neurotic nature to the idea of marriage only if I were divorced. Just as the infinite is nearest to naught, and happiness is, in a way, a state of unhappiness

(and vice versa), so the success of a marriage can be proved only by a quick divorce. I therefore divorced Dora on the fourth day of our marriage and was able to live with her happily till my next divorce, four years later.

Having decided not to make writing my career I settled down, in 1936, in the South of France and wrote forty-one books in quick succession. Eleven of these were never published, but thirty became world best sellers. I am told that there is still a great demand for most of them in the bookstalls off the Charing Cross Road.

All these books were published under several pen-names—Dr. A. Costa, Dr. A. B. Kosta, and Dr. A. C. Coster. The fact that all these pen-names were so similar to my own name must reveal that, in a sense, I was both proud and ashamed to have written such books.

I write as a stammerer talks. I sweat

out every word slowly and painfully, re-writing, re-writing and re-writing all the time. My final typescript is usually the 70th version of my first text. Over a number of years my average monthly output has remained two printed lines (of the length of this column) for fiction and one printed line for non-fiction. I may be told, perhaps, that I have published, in the past fifteen years, some twenty books of fiction, essays and autobiography, in addition to thirty-three volumes of Encyclopedias and Dictionaries. There are, then, my newspaper and magazine articles. This total may well come to over two printed lines per month, but if that is so I should say that most of my writing must have been done, as it were, sub-consciously. This is a well-known psychological process. My conscious writing has been, in this sense, really invisible. It has remained not completely linked with my intellectual limbo and my emotional libido. This, too, has deepened considerably my inferiority complex. For

I am fully aware that I have failed to write as tortuously as I claim to write.

* * * * *

In 1933 while travelling in Soviet Central Asia I found I had to share my sleeping compartment with a young Moscow ballerina. I felt so awe-struck by her beauty that I could not find a word to say for the first ten days and nights of our journey. She had grace and poise and her movements were swift and impressive. But the agonizing timidity of my childhood had returned and, combined with my usual inferiority complex, it paralysed even the most modest of my desires.

Besides, I felt a strong sense of guilt as my ballerina smelt of very good scent. This made my dreams an aching nightmare full of nostalgia for the world of the decaying bourgeoisie, where women spent hours lingering in bath-tubs filled with champagne.

Finally, on the eleventh day of our journey, in a moment of real panic, I asked her whether she liked tea (she was drinking hot Russian tea which the carriage attendant had brought in).

"Yes," she said, "and you, do you like tea too?" (I was drinking tea as well.)

This innocent conversation started the saddest affair of my life, whose memory was to haunt me for years.

I was, of course, madly and desper-

ately in love. I was twenty-seven, and I had obviously fallen victim to the eternal romantic deviation. But my troubles started when my ballerina (her name was Vera) responded passionately. As usual the fulfilment of my fondest dream brought an acute sense of frustration. I was, as I always am, on the defensive against the temptation of enjoying enjoyment.

* * * * *

During the war I found myself for some weeks in Brixton prison (I had entered this country without a passport). In spite of their mediaeval plumbing British prisons are the best in Europe (I speak from experience as I have been imprisoned in most continental countries). The happiest recollections of my life in Brixton are connected with the nights of the air raids. I was locked up alone in a completely dark cell. Bombs were falling all over the place and the whole prison was shaken on its foundations. Yet I felt happy, secure and safe, and, for a few seconds, almost without an inferiority complex. But the moment the whistling noise of the bombs died down my nagging sense of guilt reoccurred. One is never as complex free as one imagines. If I am left temporarily without a complex I feel that it only means that I am suffering from a strong complex about not having a complex.

The most serious cause of my deeply ingrained sense of guilt and ever increasing inferiority complex is the realization that in all my political writings during the past fifteen years I have been proved right, for the right reasons. When I was a Communist for seven long years between 1932 and 1939 I was wrong. But I was wrong for the right reasons, not for the wrong reasons. For this (right) reason my inferiority complex was not then of truly Cathedral size proportions, as it is now (for the wrong reason). It is really frustrating and highly infuriating to be right for the right reasons and for nearly fifteen years in succession. I feel on the defensive against the possibility of being right for a further period of fifteen years. As Freud surely must have said somewhere, complex-ridden characters feel that their complexes come first. The reasons for them are of secondary importance. My Complex Right or Wrong is my motto and Mine is Not to Reason Why.

Irrigation

The opening by India of the new Bhakra Canals may threaten the water-supplies of the canal colonies in Pakistan.

HERE there is heat a man can hardly stand
And fiery winds continually blowing,
Full of brown dust: and in the miles of sand
Scattered patches of green forlornly growing,
Wan and sickly and scarcely worth the sowing:
Desert to the south; and on the other hand,
Shorn of its strength, an idle water flowing
Past waiting things and men through a waste land.

Gravity, calculated and marginal,
Draws on the hesitant water through the heat
To this last village, where the colonists
Wait on its hope: who, if the river fall,
Have no way round. Disaster is complete
And brings the desert back.
Nothing subsists.

P. M. HUBBARD



Julius, Gregory and Jawaharlal

ON the face of it there seems much to be said for, and little against, the reformed World Calendar which Mr. Nehru has championed and which the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is discussing this week. It is designed to remove nearly all the palpable inconveniences of the existing style, and to do it with the minimum of disturbance and fuss. By simply nipping out from the sequence of weekdays that awkward 365th day (which is hereafter to be dateless and to be celebrated at the end of the year as Worldsday), and by giving thirty-one days to the first month in each quarter and thirty to all the rest, it ensures that each quarter has exactly thirteen weeks, that each month contains twenty-six working days, and that dates and days of the week agree from year to year. It is logical, sensible, stable, perpetual, world-wide, and economically advantageous, and my belief is that the British public will have none of it.

Mr. Nehru, as champion of this admirable reform, faces one grave disadvantage from which his predecessors, Julius and Pope Gregory XIII, were free. Or rather he lacks an advantage they enjoyed. When Julius Cæsar was moved to take action, the calendar had fallen so far behind the sun that the traditional harvest and wine festivals were being celebrated about three months after (or would it be before?) the corn and grapes were gathered in, and even the stupidest Roman could see that something would have to be done. Both Julius and Gregory, moreover, strong as were the arguments in favour of reform, had no need to put them. An edict in each case was enough.

Mr. Nehru cannot dictate, nor can he urge that the existing calendar is so badly off-course as to constitute a public scandal. Pope Gregory's calendar is not absolutely exact; indeed it is going wrong, despite its ingenious distribution of leap-years, at the rate of one day in 3,323 years. But the fact that something will have to be done by the year 5,905 at latest is not much of a battle-cry for immediate reform. So, denied the opportunity to plead necessity, the proponents of the World Calendar pin their faith to convenience. Never

mind about the calendar's being infinitesimally inexact, they say; let's have it useful and logical.

It isn't very likely that the British, whatever the rest of the world may say, will be taken in by such talk as this. Julius Cæsar's calendar we accepted readily enough, when the Romans came over a hundred years later and enforced it. Pope Gregory's, after thinking the matter over quietly for a hundred and seventy years, we passed into law in 1752. But there it was a question of keeping on terms with the sun. Here, we are asked to make changes in the interests of chartered accountants and schoolmistresses. Book-keeping will be facilitated. Statistics for different months and quarters will be directly comparable. Academic terms can be fixed for ever. Money will be saved in vast quantities. "The faults of the Gregorian calendar," says Mr. Harold Watkins in his excellent *Time Counts*, a book that tells me all I shall ever need to know about calendars, "cost the men's wear trade alone something like £42,500."

A fat lot the British public care about the misfortunes of the men's wear trade. It has never been our way to have things neat and logical; and on that rock, on the ingrained British liking for a certain higgledy-piggledy in their affairs, the World Calendar will founder over here. Not that we shall be open about it. Our opposition, as ever in the face of reform, will take the form of a multiplicity of disjointed attacks. It is monstrous, we shall protest, that any man should be doomed for life to have his birthday on a Monday. Those whose birthdays fall on the 31st of March, May or August will lose them altogether—and that includes the Duke of Gloucester. What is to happen to the anniversary of Wellington's entry into St. Sebastian? The proper sequence of Sundays will be destroyed, and on the day after Worldsday we shall find ourselves resting on the eighth day, an unheard-of thing. Calendar-makers will go bankrupt. Old Moore's prognostications will be upset. February 30 is unEnglish. Farmers will forget to feed their cattle on the dateless day, watches will be left unwound, and all births will be illegitimate. The tides may well be

By H. F. ELLIS

thrown out of joint by this impious interference with the natural lengths of the months, and widespread flooding will result. New Year's Eve in Scotland will be celebrated twice on consecutive days, leading to many deaths from over-indulgence. Wrongly dated cheques will cause a panic in financial circles, Shrove Tuesday will fall on a Wednesday and all references to Clive's capture of Arcot on August 31 1751 will have to be deleted from official documents.

In face of such arguments as these—and none that I have mentioned is one whit less cogent than those urged vehemently and for years against the Daylight Saving Bill—what is the good of Mr. Nehru's asserting (as he, or his representative, does in a Memorandum to the Secretary-General) that the new calendar "offers harmony and order to all strata of society—government, finance, industry, labour, retail trade, administration of justice, home life, transportation and education"? Harmony and order be blowed. Give us back our 31st of March.





Monday, July 19

Mr. FRANK BESWICK was busy at the beginning of questions, gingering-up

Mr. SANDYS to speed the production of Victor

bombers, of aeroplanes that take off straight up, and of engines to drive the outsize Princess flying-boats. But a few hours later he was chivvying the Minister of Transport to reduce the noise and vibration of aircraft. Mr. LENNOX-BOYD told him that Britain could be silent if it were enslaved; but, rejecting that solution, he expressed his hope of a tolerable compromise—which was at least more encouraging than the fatalism of the Lords the previous week.

The main business of the day was concerned with the potentialities of Scotland. A representative selection of these, ranging from shipbuilding to the banks of Loch Lomond, were competitively praised by either side in antiphon.

Tuesday, July 20

By announcing his resignation at the end of his speech, Sir THOMAS DUG-

DALE removed a good deal of interest from the Crichel Down debate

at the outset, for there is no point in re-torpedoing a scuttled ship. It was a good move on his part, not because—human nature being what it is—it won him a meed of sympathy, but because it to some extent spiked the enemy's guns. Every head that the mob had howled for was given them, and howls thereafter left the blood uncurdled.

Not that the Opposition refrained from voicing the howls it had prepared. Mr. GEORGE BROWN had an hour-long speech ready, and it ran its course as inexorably as an elephant's gestation. But the star of the debate was Sir RICHARD ACLAND. Under a harlequin cloak of buffoonery, Sir RICHARD launched on the late Minister, his two under-secretaries, and Sir Andrew Clark, the author of the Crichel Down report, as vituperative an attack as the House has heard for some time. One of his points was that the Ministers had

failed to "go through the recognized motions of 'complaints drill'." What motions Sir RICHARD was going through, Heaven knows; they included bending at the knees and hips into a figure S, loping along the bench with the crouching gait of Groucho Marx, and waving alternate forefingers with enough *verve* to break the wrist of a less loose-limbed Member. Whenever he quoted from anyone on the Government side, he affected a curious high nasal whine, most unlike the tones of Sir THOMAS DUGDALE, Mr. NUGENT or Lord CARRINGTON; but when quoting from Dr. Norman Maier on *Psychology in Industry*, the phrases boomed forth in a ringing baritone. He ranged easily through a *tessitura* of a couple of octaves. Sir RICHARD is undoubtedly the best raw material in the House for television; and the extraordinary thing is that he spoke quite a lot of good sound sense.

The vituperation of most of the speakers who followed was reserved for the civil servants in the case, who, they thought, had been let off lightly; but a portion was reserved for the 1922 Committee, the newest Labour toy. Since the Opposition all appeared to believe that Sir THOMAS's resignation had been forced by this committee, Mr. JOHN MACLAY need hardly have bothered to exculpate the National Liberals, whom no one in the House had even mentioned.

The Ministry of Agriculture always seems to get its man in Conservative administrations. Sir THOMAS's successor may ride this spirited mount with more success; but when his turn comes to go he will not leave more genuine sympathy, on both sides, than Sir THOMAS has.

Before the debate began, Sir WINSTON CHURCHILL explained jovially how it was that there had been a leakage to the Press of his news about the Ministry of Materials. It was quite simple; there had been no leakage. Now, when the Ministry was *formed*, under the last Government . . . Mr. HERBERT MORRISON evaded this *tu quoque*, and Mr. ARTHUR LEWIS, who originally raised the matter, was suppressed by the Speaker to such effect that he never got a comment in at all.

Wednesday, July 21

It was necessary for the Opposition to disavow their former activities in

two respects before they were in position to attack

the Government over its pensions policy. "We have never claimed infallibility," Dr. SUMMERSKILL confessed as she denied the validity of her own created cost of living index; and "I am not afraid to say that I have changed my mind," admitted Mr. JIM GRIFFITHS when it was found that in his day as Minister of Pensions he had declared that pensions should not be pegged to the cost of living. These awkward hurdles crossed, Mr. OSBERT PEAKE's promise to review pension rates, and his sensible decision that any increase in them must be accompanied by an increase in contributions, could be



"The facts make it as clear as the nose on my face."—Sir Richard Acland

laughed at, wept at, sneered at and shouted at with clear consciences.

"The aged cannot be fed on crocodile tears," said Dr. SUMMERSKILL, so her supporters substituted what might be called crocodile laughter—the hard, pitiless, meaningless laughter of schoolboys ragging an easy-going master. Mr. PEAKE, with his occasional stammer and his straightforward good-nature, is not the ideal Minister to deal with an unruly Opposition; but for anyone who cared to listen and not to mock there was little doubt that he came out on top in this conflict.

After him came the crocodile phrases, "national scandal," "deliberately increasing the cost of living for the poorer sections of the community," "shocking indictment," and the rest. Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN, who wound up, put his finger on the Opposition case; they knew the Government was going to increase pensions, so they had to find some way in which the increase could be discredited. Mr. MACMILLAN disposed in a summary phrase of Dr. SUMMERSKILL's doubts about the cost of living index: "Unhappy statesmen!" he exclaimed. "They would have been better cast as courtiers to Canute."

During questions, Mr. CROOKSHANK carried his bland stonewalling technique to a charming point. Mr. SHINWELL asked the Prime Minister a question

about the Suez negotiations: "I have been asked to reply," said Mr. CROOKSHANK. "My right hon. Friend has nothing to add to his previous statements." Mr. SHINWELL pressed him. Mr. CROOKSHANK favoured him with a grin straight from the Senior Drones. "If my right hon. Friend has nothing to add," he said, "I certainly haven't."

Thursday, July 22

When a speaker uses phrases like "I have no need to apologize for," it usually means that he is about to apologize for

House of Commons: Indo-China, Kenya, Westminster
something. Mr. EDEN, at the end of his statement on the Geneva deliberations, asked the House to remember that "the only alternative to these arrangements" was the continuation, and perhaps the further spread, of the fighting and misery in Indo-China. The inference was that he regarded the settlement as a convenient expedient, but hardly a case of "peace with honour." Mr. EDEN, who looked so tired that he could hardly keep his eyes open, was received with cheers both when he entered the Chamber and when he rose to speak; and when he sat down there was great competition to pay tributes to him for his achievements. Mr. HERBERT MORRISON spoke for the Opposition, Brigadier MEDLICOTT for the Conservative back-benchers, Major LEGGE-BOURKE (who referred to Mr. EDEN with a nicely-calculated hesitation as "my right hon. Fr— the right hon. Member") for the Independent Conservatives. Mr. JOHN HYND was perhaps unmindful of what kind of a triumph it was when he thought the moment now ripe for renewing discussions over Germany. Let West Germany=Viet-Nam, East Germany=Cambodia, Poland=Laos . . .

Earlier, while the House was discussing the business for next week, Mr. EMrys HUGHES had asked the Leader of the House if time would be found for his motion expressing gratitude to the Foreign Secretary for the Indo-Chinese settlement. "My right hon. Friend will be making a statement," said Mr. CROOKSHANK; "no doubt the hon. Member will cheer when he gets up." The hon. Member did.

In the course of a short debate on Kenya, Mr. LYTTELTON gave a full and rather reassuring survey of progress in Kenya. After so lucid a statement it was discouraging to hear Members speak of "more youth clubs and Y.M.C.A. activities," as if Kenya were a kind of large Bermondsey and the



Mau Mau no more than a set of African Teddy-boys.

Finally the House had a short discussion about its own amenities. As this dealt chiefly with facilities for working, it did not, naturally, arouse so much interest as the debates earlier in the session on payment of Members.

Friday, July 23

The Opposition as a whole welcomed the Food and Drugs Amendment Bill, but Dr. SUMMERSKILL was

House of Commons: Food and Drugs
moved to transports of indignation by it. No wonder, she said, the Government had been so shy in presenting it for a second reading; all those beautiful draft regulations for the clean handling of food would have been too much for the commercial interests behind the Conservative Party. "The Price the Minister is Prepared to Pay, to have the Pressure Group Called Off," she orated, "is the Health of the People!"

She read through a long list of regulations, with the modifications proposed in them by the Ministry, in the hope of substituting shame for laughter on the Tory back-bench faces; the catering interests, it seemed, had actually brought pressure to bear to stop people washing their hands in kitchens and to allow them unrestricted spitting.

But the laughter went on.

B. A. YOUNG



The Rake's Progress : The Dramatic Critic By RONALD SEARLE



1. PROLOGUE Kissed by Bernard Shaw when young in the presence of Granville Barker. Inspired



2. EMERGENCE Produces Othello in bathing costumes for OUDS. Praised by Isis. Bad notice in The Times



3. RECOGNITION Writes to The Times suggesting their critic's retirement in favour of a more contemporary approach. Offer declined. Flayed



4. SUCCESS Joins R+veille. Writes slashing attack on Dramatic Criticism Today. Immediately signed up by Popular Daily. Thrilled



5. TRIUMPH Meteoric Success. Banned by West End Theatres for kindness to H. men Swaffer. Expelled from The Caprice. Nervous Breakdown



6. DOWNFALL Brilliantly restrained comeback on BBC Critics. Drama Adjudicator Arts Council. Treasurer Critics Circle. Respected



BOOKING OFFICE

The Worst Used Man in the Empire

Warren Hastings. Keith Feiling. Macmillan, 30/-

WARREN HASTINGS is our first and greatest proconsul. Thirty years ago when the Raj still was the Raj and the Mahatma, as Sir Winston Churchill put it, "a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir," Lord Curzon, rubbing salt into his own viceregal wounds, wrote dismissively in his *British Government in India*:

This is not the place in which to attempt a final judgment upon the career of this remarkable man. That his name . . . stands supreme in the list of those who have served India and suffered for that service will not be disputed.

In those halcyon days before the Simon Commission one could still think of Hastings as the first in a long line of imperial taskmasters stretching away for the duration of the *Pax Britannica* or, alternatively, to the crack of Anglo-Saxon doom. (It depended on whether you were sitting in Jhansi Gaol or the Byculla Club.) Now that the hatchets are buried and the Congress spinning-wheel flies over Lutyens' Delhi, we can at last afford to see Warren Hastings in the perspective of his own century. And something like a final judgment becomes possible.

He is probably the most unjustly defamed man in English history. Francis and the Coalition Whigs—that gang of whitened sepulchres—broke his career on the wheel of their intrigue and envy. Macaulay finished off the job half a century later in the famous essay. Hastings' good name was sacrificed to the Great Whig Legend, that myth of sea-green incorruptibility that a generation of contemporary historians has toiled to demolish. (The good work still progresses.) But throughout the nineteenth century British Indian judges and administrators busied themselves in restoring the great man's reputation, and Professor Feiling, in his exciting and scholarly new biography, has built splendidly on their foundations. This is the best life of Warren Hastings that we are ever likely to get.

He came of a good but decayed stock

that had been in the Cotswolds since Domesday Book. The Hastings of Daylesford made a succession of base marriages early in the eighteenth century and the family fairly crawled with black sheep. Years later, when Hastings was a nabob in Bengal, he was startled to hear of an Uncle Thomas who kept a cider garden and spoke of my "neveu." ("I was even ignorant," remarked the Governor-General primly, "that such a person existed.") The parish had declined with the family, and Hastings, effectually orphaned when he was a year old, was put in charge of an old



village woman. An uncle sent him to Westminster but died before he could do more, and at 17 Hastings was shipped out to India as a Company cadet. Years later he declared that all his life he had been a "solitary, insulated wanderer." His early loneliness and poverty, his desire for a social and family background at all costs, is probably the key to much of his character, though Professor Feiling never specifically says so.

He was a slight, hardy, determined young man, good at his job, assiduous at his Persian and Urdu, interested in Indians, the exact opposite of the roaring bully-boys that Clive brought up from Madras to defeat Siraj-ud-Daulah. Clive believed in a strong and high hand with the Indians. Moslem and Hindu alike were "indolent, luxurious, ignorant and cowardly." They must

be ruled with a rod of iron and squeezed until the pips squeaked. In this way everyone could get home quicker and spend their ill-gotten *lacs* on red ribands and pocketboroughs.

All this was anathema to Hastings. "Among the natives of India," he wrote, "are men of as strong intellect, as sound integrity, as honourable feelings as any in this kingdom." Early in his career he declared: "I feel my mind expand to something greater: I have caught the desire of applause in public life." Having once caught it, he never let go of it. For thirteen years he governed Bengal, and indirectly the rest of British India, in a blaze of glory and acrimony, grappling with the tangled reins of war, trade, diplomacy and the raging factions within his own Council. Having carved us an empire in India, he went home to face a trial for corruption. His accusers were the greatest orators of the age and each of them was thirsting for his blood. In the most shameful passage of an otherwise great life Burke arraigned Hastings as a "rat," a "weasel," a "keeper of a pigsty wallowing in corruption." The showpiece was Sheridan's speech on the Begums of Oudh; tickets for Westminster Hall sold at fifty guineas apiece, and peeresses began queueing at 8 a.m. But, alas, none of the charges stuck. Hastings was acquitted, a ruined man, and gradually, over the next twenty years, won back his place in the nation's esteem. In 1813 the Commons, by a "sudden spontaneous impulse," rose as one man and uncovered as he left the House. A year later Prinny presented him to the Czar and the King of Prussia as "one of the most deserving and one of the worst used men in the Empire."

British India, before the missionaries and the memsahibs cleaned it up, was, as Hastings said, "a wild chaos." Angry young men fought furiously beneath the Pagoda Tree for collectorships, bullock-contracts, salt commissions and each other's women. Magnums of burnt champagne quaffed at 100 degrees killed them off like flies: the cemetery of St. John's, Calcutta, testifies to their macabre junketing. In the belching, red-eyed Bengal of Hickey and Bob Pott, Hastings must have cut a curious figure. Temperate, improvident, absurdly uxorious, he liked soft toothbrushes and preferred claret to

burgundy. Always too busy to make much money for himself, he was notoriously lax about his friends' pickings. He must have seemed a bit of a muff. Yet to us there is something sombre and compelling about this fatalistic empire builder, who quoted the Bhagavad-Gita ("Let the Motive be in the Deed and not in the Event") two centuries before Professor Toynbee, and told his compatriots that the Hindu scriptures would live "when the British Dominion in India has long ceased to exist."

JOHN RAYMOND

Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1953-54.
Oxford University Press, £5-10-0

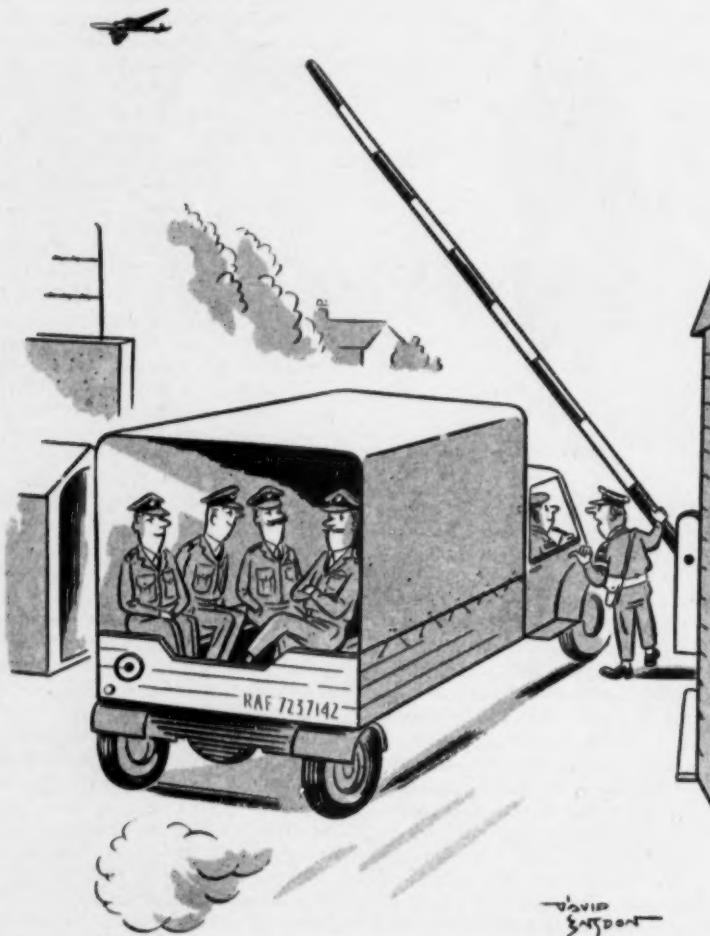
The anonymous author of the celebrated Preface carries on the tradition of pungent comment established by his predecessor Dean Malden. Though his observations on the Church's attitude to divorce have been canvassed to the exclusion of all else, there is much more of what Carlyle called "cool vigour and

laconic pith" in the rest of his critical essay.

Remarking that there were no significant protests against the Queen's Coronation taking its traditional Christian form, he concludes that so long as there is an Established Church "the secular state does not exist in these islands, nor is there any widespread desire for it; and it is largely because of this historic and present fact that we have neither an anti-Christian civil policy nor a Church party in politics."

He severely criticizes the Bishops' Meetings at which the most important decisions are reached in private. They tend, he says, to encourage the notion that the bishops are a caste apart. He notes also a "growing ecclesiastical tendency" to resent all criticism simply because it is criticism, and he foresees no successors to such men of independent mind as Headlam, Barnes, Henson and Inge "in the Church of England as it is controlled to-day."

C. B. M.



"And drive careful. These bomber chaps cost £25,000 apiece."

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The Stranger At My Side. Gwyn Thomas.
Gollancz, 12/6

This time the theme is the wooing away of the narrator's Uncle Edwin from serious thoughts about the condition of humanity to taking a more pagan, goatlike and unpolitical view of life. Uncle Edwin is drawn into lighting fireworks at a fête, refereeing a football match and taking part in a decorating business run by Theo Morgan the Monologue. The farcical scenes are better than ever and the sparkling freshets of language never droop.

It is extraordinary, judging by the quotations on the blurb, that critics still treat Mr. Thomas as a kind of Welsh Wodehouse. He is certainly as inventive both in jokes and language as Mr. Wodehouse; but he is far nearer to Sean O'Casey. The frenzied fun in this tale of a Welsh town in the Slump is not just lighted spirit. Lower down the flame turns to searing satire and lower again come the cracks in the blackness through which it finds its way. The blackness has never been painted like this before.

R. G. G. P.

Kittle Cattle. A. G. Street. Michael Joseph, 12/6

"In farming," says Joe Hardiman, Mr. Street's ideal farmer, "you do business with your neighbours, people who stay put." Through Joe it demonstrated how to deal with your land, your crops, cattle, and men also. "Never offer the British farm worker a perhaps; always present him with a *fait accompli*." Joe understands his men. "Safest rule is to cut wheat three days before a chap like Fred wants to cut it," Joe tells Don Chaplin, the publisher's son who, by taking to the land instead of raising more crops of bad books, gives the author the sensible square peg to fit into the four-square hole of his story.

In whittling this peg Mr. Street is no craftsman, for Don's background seems as ineptly handled as the farming foreground is soundly solid. All the women — publisher's wife, farmer's sister, or dairymaid — treat all the men as small boys to be peremptorily shooed out of the house.

R. C. S.

A Handful of Blackberries. Ignazio Silone. Cape, 12/6

Ignazio Silone's strength as a writer lies in his ability to blend fable and reality, so that his subjects assume the strong dignity of legend. In *A Handful of Blackberries* there is an engineer who

HUMOROUS ART

THE British and American Humorous Art Exhibition in aid of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association will be on show at the Gaumont Cinema, 4 The Parade, Northampton from July 28 to August 7. It includes 250 original drawings by 117 British and American Artists. Admission is free.

wants to break away from the Communist Party, a young Jewish girl who tries to adhere to it, two Party inquisitors. They are firmly drawn characters but their more important existence is as figures almost allegorical seen against the tapestry of our time. Behind them is Lazzaro, who one day when things become intolerable will come forth with his trumpet and blow away oppression. Behind Lazzaro again are the ignorant, helpless, saltyly humorous peasants who work and suffer.

The result is a sad and moving book. Now that the faith expressed by Silone in *Fontamara* has been destroyed, what remains? For those, like the engineer, who deliberately make "the choice of the poor as comrades" there is only the toast to "the future liberation," more distant with every passing year, when Lazzaro will reappear with his trumpet.

J. S.



AT THE PLAY

Six Characters in Search of An Author
(ST. JAMES'S)

Meet a Body (DUKE OF YORK'S)

Salomé and *The Respectable Prostitute*
(ST. MARTIN'S)

THE odd thing about PIRANDELLO's obsession with reality and non-reality is that, tiresome as it often seems in the study, it can become so interesting on the stage. *Six Characters in Search of An Author* is a trick play, a fantasy of the intellect with little chance, one would guess, of gripping in the theatre; and yet well acted it has a strange power to make us disregard the impatient actors whose rehearsal has been interrupted, and feel more than an abstract sympathy for the tortured characters begging to fulfil their destiny. Just as there is no satisfactory answer to Captain Boyle's inspired question in *Juno and the Paycock*—"what is the moon?"—there is none here to the argument that the people of fiction who have been allowed to have their say are fixed in an immortality denied to the shifting creatures of flesh-and-blood.

In this production ROYSTON MORLEY has got all the important stresses right, and PIRANDELLO's skill as a cerebral juggler easily overcomes our nagging common sense. First of all the rehearsal is taken by REGINALD TATE with all the authority of a spoilt but commanding producer. Then the Father, played by RALPH MICHAEL, quietly and courteously persuades us of the urgency of his case, while MARDA VANNE's Mother stuns us by a sheer solidity of dumb suffering. And finally MARY MORRIS, poised and delicately brilliant, does a kind of strip-tease of feeling that dominates the whole of this extraordinary party. Her performance should be seen by anyone who takes acting seriously. It is one of the finest in London.



Producer—MR. REGINALD TATE

Step-daughter—MISS MARY MORRIS

Six Characters in Search of an Author
The Father—MR. RALPH MICHAEL

Practised hands have been at work on *Meet a Body*, a lunatic romp that uses crime as a casual springboard for farce. FRANK LAUNDER and SIDNEY GILLIAT know their business, and are well served. Sometimes their humour works a little thin, but their situations are good and no sooner is the cream off one than we are whisked on to another. Moreover, the evening is a triumph for incompetence, which in the age of business efficiency is always heartening. The sun shines brightly for a vacuum-cleaner tout with no control over his insubordinate snakes. He stumbles on a body in a grand piano, on a plot to assassinate a Cabinet Minister, and on a charming girl lamentably engaged to a whiskered imbecile from the B.B.C. Although not a man of courage, indeed patently the reverse, the salesman emerges from all this as a romantic hero, the girl clinging permanently to his arm. It is enough to give any of us hope. BRIAN REECE plays him in a solemn frenzy of dither and infatuation that never fails to be funny. JOY SHELTON is gleefully the girl, and several minor characters are richly done, in particular the outraged fiancé, by WILLIAM KENDALL, and the north-country pub-keeper, by JULIEN MITCHELL. If this carefree farce runs as I think it should, much will be owed to HENRY KENDALL's production. Its timing and the many telling bits of business are a delight.

It's difficult to say which is the worse of the two short pieces popping up the bill at the St. Martin's. *The Respectable Prostitute*, no doubt written by SARTRE in a burst of gratitude for America's generosity to his country during the war, plays like a melodramatic feuilleton in *Pravda*. There is an honest little whore, and a leering old Senator who keeps calling her "My Child," and his very unpleasant son who frames a negro in order to save an even more unpleasant cousin who comes of an old southern family and has been to Harvard. Apart from the girl and the negro—BERNADETTE MILNES and ERROL JOHN act them serviceably—all the people are made of the best propaganda cardboard, which the production does little to unstiffen.

Salomé is WILDE with the warm tap turned full on to a heap of cheap bath-salts. The only light relief from its turgid monotony is the thought that the Lord Chamberlain should have bothered to ban such an exceedingly dull play. AGNES BERNELLE goes through the dance of the seven veils with the utmost decency, but though it brings Herod near to a merciful apoplexy my reaction corresponded exactly with that of Cæsar's ambassador, who was obviously counting the minutes until he could get to bed. The dispatch of John the Baptist (whose voice had been wonderfully strengthened by preaching in the wilderness) is held up almost indefinitely by the habit of the

Judean court of repeating three or four times lines which at their best are bejewelled only with poetic paste. JOHN BOYD-BRENT booms oracularly as the Prophet, FRANK THRING gives an excellent imitation of Douglas Byng as Herod, and the only titter-proof character is VIVIENNE BENNETT's Herodias.

Recommended

Light fare for stuffy nights: *Both Ends Meet* (Apollo), a farce on tax-dodging; *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (Her Majesty's), America guyng America; and *The Boy Friend* (Wyndham's), mocking us in the 'twenties.

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE PICTURES

Dial M for Murder
Elephant Walk

MOST play-into-film films are troubled by their parentage. The directors indulge in a bewilderment of flash-backs and the camera leaves no scenic avenue unturned to avoid the imputation that their child was begotten on the wrong side of the safety curtain. *Dial M for Murder* (Director: ALFRED HITCHCOCK) is far too efficient and self-confident a production to bother with that sort of thing. Almost all the action takes place in a single room, and this, with the superbly accurate direction, produces a discipline and orderliness which films often fail to achieve. The self-confidence is just as apparent in the controlled understatement of the acting, which avoids at the same time the deadpan heroics of the gangster film. Luckily *Dial M for Murder* doesn't strain after being a great film; no message, and no emotions evoked except excitement and

the pleasure of seeing a thing so well done. It was, I suppose, perfectly fair to cast JOHN WILLIAMS, the detective, as a stock-type Englishman, very cavalry and cannier than he pretends, but though he plays it well, dry and beautifully timed, I found the old laughs a little irritating. On the other hand the criminals, RAY MILLAND as the gifted amateur, not experienced enough to be completely suave but playing his luck boldly, and ANTHONY DAWSON as the seedy semi-professional, are unexceptionable. The long scene wherein the former persuades the latter to do a little murdering for him is one of the chief delights of the film.

Elephant Walk (Director: WILLIAM DIETERLE) has all the qualities of a lending-library book, the sort that one brings back when asked to change a book for someone else. It relies largely on local colour (Ceylon) and the day-dream appeal of a girl from an English country town transported into strange surroundings and there involved in a spot of melodrama. The local Technicolor is a continual visual pleasure; the Orient is obviously a fine place for this sort of film, with a plot loose enough to find room for native ceremonies and dancing and wild animals; and some of the near-relevant scenes, in particular one of brightly-dressed tea-pickers filing down in long curves to the plantations, were pretty to watch as well. The local girl, played with a fairly willing suspension of disbelief by ELIZABETH TAYLOR, does her job as a focus for female imaginings without causing embarrassment. But the elephants, who finally smash and set fire to the elegant unhappy abode to which she has been transported, manage somehow to lose their senatorial impressive-

ness and are reduced to a herd of efficiently handled extras.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Beautiful Stranger (Director: DAVID MILLER) is the sort of silly film I like. Plenty of skulduggery by night on the Riviera, all far too complicated to be properly tidied up in the hurried happy ending, and a nice performance by HERBERT LOM. Otherwise there is *The Wages of Fear* (24/2/54) a magnificent film now in its last weeks at the Academy, and *Executive Suite* (30/6/54).

The one interesting thing in the new list of releases is *About Mrs. Leslie* (14/7/54), which is worth seeing only for SHIRLEY BOOTH's performance.

PETER DICKINSON



AT THE OPERA

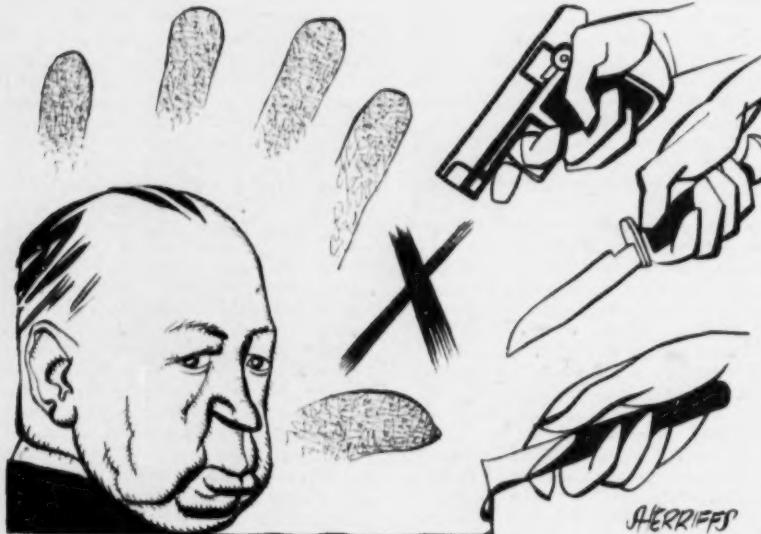
The Rake's Progress
(GLYNDEBOURNE)

A PART perhaps from politics there is nothing that makes men scorn each other more than music. In this sense IGOR STRAVINSKY is still the world's chief goad and gadfly. Stravinsky and Glyndebourne in conjunction meant the long interval given over to polemics as well as to chicken, champagne and the view across the Downs. Strolling the rose walks, we squabbled and did our best not to snarl.

Not that the stock objections to *The Rake* have ever made sense. It is very wrong, we are told, for the innovative composer of *Petrushka* and *Les Noces* to cook up a "number opera," with arias patterned technically on Purcell, Bach, Mozart, Weber. But why, in this matter, pick on Stravinsky? Why not abuse the innovating Wagner for making *Meistersinger* reek technically of the Well Tempered Clavier? Or the innovative Berlioz for modelling his masterpiece, *Les Troyens*, on Gluck and Spontini?

The truth is that music's traditional patterns and dodges still serve. Let us take a case in point. *The Rake* has a Mephistophelian tempter called Nick Shadow, amusingly conceived at Glyndebourne by the designer (OSBERT LANCASTER), the producer (CARL EBERT) and the baritone who sings him (MARKO ROTHMÜLLER) as an 1820-ish banker type, straight from St. Swithin's Lane, bald, beamish, oily of manner and hard of voice. When Shadow played cards with Rakewell in the churchyard for possession of Rakewell's soul, the orchestra fell silent: all we heard was a pair of hands in contrary motion on the harpsichord playing a sort of Bach two-part invention heightened to the evil and anguish of the situation by pungent harmonies. In this and many another instance STRAVINSKY's mating of the archaic with the new pieces straight to the core of the drama. To dismiss him as a perverse pastiche-monger simply will not do.

Nor is it any less unreasonable to write



ALFRED HITCHCOCK, His mark

[*Dial M for Murder*]

him off as cerebral and emotionless, a dealer out of dry sticks and broken bottles. The opening duet and trio of *The Rake* creak dispiritingly, I admit; but from the tenth page on the emotional pressure steadily mounts until a climax is reached in the Bedlam scene. When the forlorn, wondering madmen and mad-women crawl forth from their holes in the ground at the sound of Anne's heavenly lullaby the musical pathos becomes lacerating almost.

At any rate, that is how some of us experience *The Rake*. Our response is so strongly positive that negative testimony does not impress us much. Those who get no emotional kick have simply missed the point and must try again, we argue. If *The Rake* went into the repertory at the Garden or the Wells, as it should, the dumbs and dissidents would gradually be won over by the work's invincible merit. But there would have to be a conductor as convinced and keen as Glyndebourne's PAUL SACHER—and singers no less attuned to the leading parts than ELSIE MORISON and RICHARD LEWIS.

CHARLES REID



AT THE BALLET

La Esmeralda (FESTIVAL HALL)

THE L.C.C. in its rôle of *impresario* starts its new ballet season, in association with Mr. JULIAN BRAUNSWEG, with an important advantage. In its South Bank hall it can count on the presence of a prentice and respectful public evidently pre-disposed to favourable reaction to the entertainment set before it and not inhibited by critical standards acquired elsewhere. The physical and social circumstances of the auditorium have a lot to do with it, for they differ radically from those in which ballet is usually enjoyed. Though there is distinction of admission-price there is no distinction of comfort. All seats have a clear line of vision, and the vast foyers, many staircases and bars are accessible to all without class segregation.

The ballet company, of which Mr. ANTON DOLIN is the artistic director, is on the other hand at a considerable disadvantage in that the platform on which it performs is long, narrow and hollow, and devoid of the off-stage space and mechanical equipment proper to a theatre. Inclosure with proscenium curtain conceals difficulties of production but can do little to mitigate them. Was it in a spirit of artistic perversity that the company opened its season with a confused and clumsy work which not even the full resources of real stage would have saved from tedium?

La Esmeralda was originally inspired by Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and done at Her Majesty's Theatre more than a century ago, with the legendary Carlotta Grisi in the title rôle. Little of the original was left in the *corpus* which has now been exhumed and stretched to probably double its length.

Enough of CESARE PUGNI's rather monotonous music has been brought in from his other compositions to complete the operation, the main feature of which is entirely new choreography by NICHOLAS BERILOSOFF.

The genuine excitement which Hugo's vast romance kindled in the original choreographer some ten years after its publication was bound to lose some of its sparkle, and its complicated plot is not to be communicated in the dance to a public no longer so familiar with the novel. Hugo's story was contained within the firm triangle of Esmeralda, the beautiful gipsy dancing-girl; Quasimodo the hideously misshapen bell-ringer, and the carnally-minded Archdeacon of Joas. The ballet largely turns on a "hero" unknown as such to Hugo. NICOLA BENOIS has designed settings and costumes which are presumably intended to suggest the squalor and splendour of 15th-century Paris, but the total effect reminded me of the Grand Spectacular Ballet which used to be the climax of Part I of the Christmas pantomime.

I was sorry for dancers who were so subordinated to "picturesque" top-hamper, and to participation in mimed drama that was rarely dramatic, that they had only fleeting opportunities of showing their quality. As Esmeralda NATALIE KRASSOVSKA displayed considerable grace and agility. OLEG BRAVINSKY as Phoebus, the gipsy-girl's aristocratic lover, imparted a note of noble virility. As the Archdeacon Mr. DOLIN strikes gestures but does not dance and on the whole is very moderate with his lechery. BELINDA WRIGHT is a charming dancer who is given no real chances. JOHN GILPIN alone emerges to make an effective impact with a solo in "celebration divertissements" in a banqueting hall.

In the end the puzzle which remains unanswered is whose idea it was to labour at this heavy-footed affair—the L.C.C.'s, Mr. Braunsweg's or Mr. Dolin's? Perhaps the Festival Hall audience holds the secret.

C. B. MORTLOCK



AT THE GALLERY

Masterpieces from the São Paulo Museum of Art at the Tate Gallery

INSPIRED by a newspaper proprietor of taste and imagination (Senator Aassis Chateaubriand), the citizens of São Paulo in Brazil have contrived to acquire some notable European pictures. After a tour of several capitals, including Paris and Brussels, the bulk of the acquisitions are here until August 15, after which they depart to their new home. Our natural regret at the loss to Europe of so many fine paintings will be tempered with pleasure at the opportunity of seeing, however briefly, many fresh or little known works by a number of favourite masters. The collection,



"Well, it worked, didn't it!"

which began only in 1947, and is always growing, has a foundation of Italian and Flemish Renaissance, and eighteenth-century paintings. Its richness, however, lies particularly in French nineteenth-century painting with outstanding Renoirs and other treasures of that period.

Among the older masters the proximity to each other in the same room at the Tate of such diverse artists as Cranach, Mantegna, Rubens, Chardin and Reynolds, to mention only a few—of the last of whom the Cruttendon children is a particularly fine example—has some of the charm and interest which we associate with the great private collections of the past. Turner, whose rendering of light was revolutionary, and Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was admired by Delacroix and studied by Degas, add lustre to the collection, and Constable is represented by one of the several similar Salisbury Cathedral sketches.

It is, however, the group of portraits by Goya, once termed "last of the old masters and first of the moderns," that may particularly rouse envy in English hearts. And fascinating comparisons can be made between him and Manet, who disputes with him at least the title of "first of the moderns." Manet, himself a one-time student of the Spaniards, is represented by two masterly, vibrating, full-size portraits ("the Artist" and "Pertuiset the lion hunter"), and a study of nudes. These are the finest evidence of the stature he reached before he was cut off in his prime, and a great acquisition for São Paulo. The nineteenth-century works generally survive, but are not aided by, the cold light walls of two of the rooms at the Tate, mentioned in a previous notice. They were better seen in Paris.

Recommended

The Trafford Gallery, 119 Mount Street, W.1 (closes July 31). The "primitive" paintings of Mari Watts show freshness, imagination and humour untainted by a trace of affectation. A delightful performance.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



ON THE AIR

Good, Good and Atrocious

WHAT a relief—after the mawkish, tear-jerking parade of suffering humanity entitled "Ask Pickles," the unbelievable inanities of "Garrison Theatre" and the puerility of more and still more parlour games—to find television back to form with another excellent documentary. *Mock Auction* ("If you bid—you lose!") was a timely *exposé* of the methods employed at fake auctions, those disgusting exhibitions of super-salesmanship at which the unwary, the innocent and the simple-minded are made to part with hard cash in exchange for chromium-plated trash. This programme was so effective that the "wide boys" are certain to feel uneasy when next they mount the rostrum. I should not be at all surprised to learn that their takings during August are down by fifty per cent. Full marks, then, to Robert Barr, who wrote the script and produced the programme, and to a first-rate team of actors.

The auction was mounted so skilfully that the viewer had no difficulty in imagining himself in an Oxford Street arcade or a fair-ground booth. When the camera concentrated upon the slick performance of the auctioneer verisimilitude was perfect. When it strayed occasionally to pick up the features of the commentator (there had to be somebody to "give the game away") there was no harsh break in continuity or atmosphere; our friendly bean-spiller was a performer from a neighbouring tent and rival attraction, someone undoubtedly in the know and clearly envious of the auctioneer's takings. The audience of mugs was also quite convincing, though some of the investors were guilty at times of over-acting.

Mr. Max Robertson,
Mr. Georgie Wood, Sir Alan Herbert, Mr. Jack Train

This programme was "a natural," with everything in its favour, and further dramatic exposures would be much more difficult to put over. All the same I should like to see Robert Barr and company discussing the facts of astrology, tipping and "shamateurism" in sport.

Another programme that I enjoyed was the *Spice of Life* scrapbook compiled by Sir Alan Herbert. The fare was very mixed, ranging from light opera to skittles, and there was a lot, rather too much, of it. But "A.P.H." was in splendid form, and so too were his boisterous, roistering fellow "Savages," or members of the celebrated Savage Club. Max Robertson, as the interviewer, was strangely dull and unhappy. He is a likeable character, one of television's most competent commentators, but on this occasion he seemed to have no heart in the proceedings. The "Savages" may have been too much for him. They're an odd lot.

My only real criticism of this programme is really a criticism of theatrical



[*Spice of Life*]

people in general. When they are on the boards I love them, but when they appear before the public as "personalities" they become far too effusive and emotional for my taste. There is too much hand-holding, back-slapping and glutinous sentimentality. They puff up their trade as if it were the highest achievement of mankind, and give the impression that they think themselves only slightly lower than the angels. These strictures do not apply to all those who took part in *Spice of Life*; and in any case I suppose we must excuse most theatrical bumptiousness as an inevitable extension into everyday affairs of professional histrionics.

The current series of American television films called *I'm the Law*, starring George Raft, should provide food for thought for all those who stand a-tiptoe with excitement as the I.T.A. rounds the last bend and gallops up the straight. Never can there have been films so slow, dreary and futile. Cliché after cliché. It is enough, it seems, to show Mr. Raft—permanently trilled and hands deep in the pockets of his raincoat—striding poker-faced from his office to the scene of some crime and back again. His adventures are entirely pedestrian and utterly incomprehensible. If this is a fair sample of the stuff now dished up for Americans I am sorry for them. The B.B.C., I imagine, are showing these films as propaganda against the new Independent Television Authority and to offset such items as "Quite Contrary," "Garrison Theatre" and "You Are There."

The second of the George Raft series, "The General's Coffin," was atrocious and contained material that was highly offensive politically. Fortunately there are few television fans as yet in Latin America.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



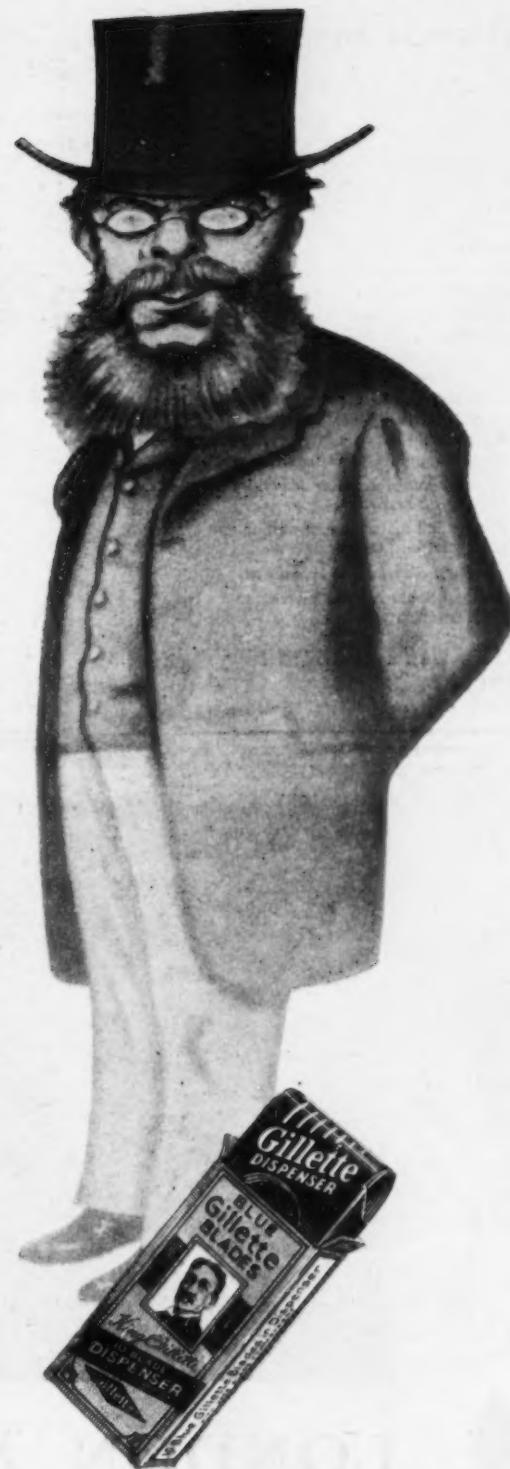
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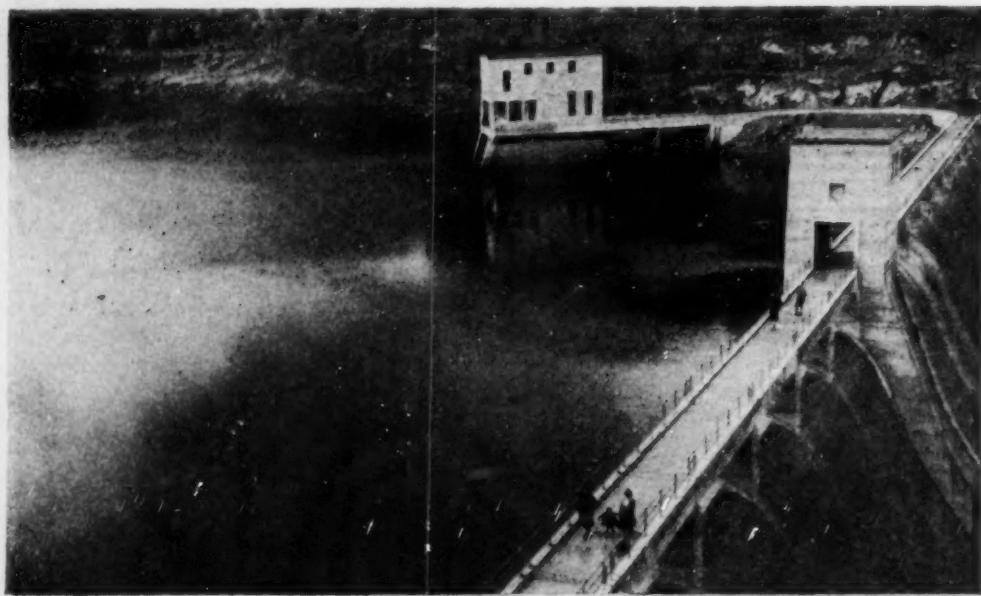
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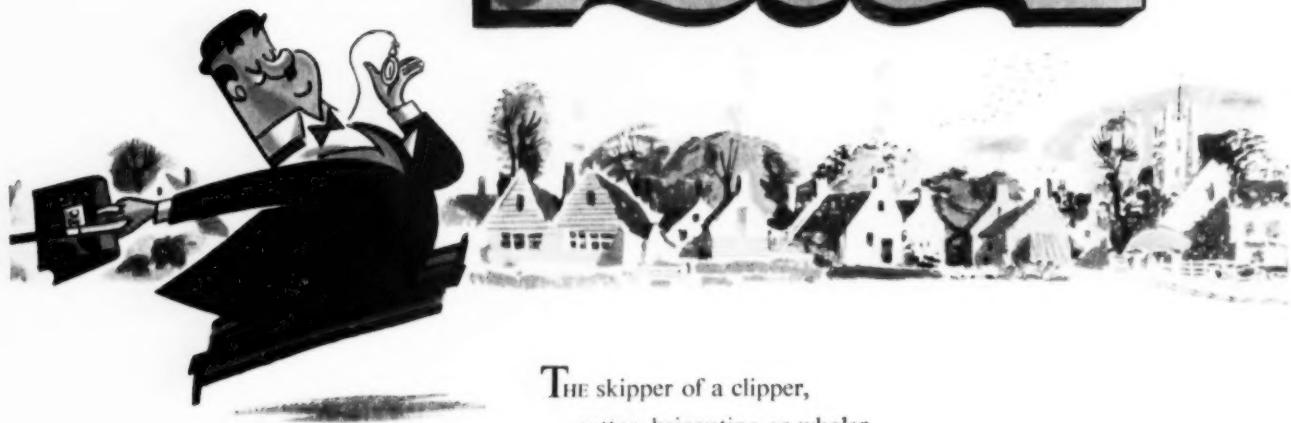
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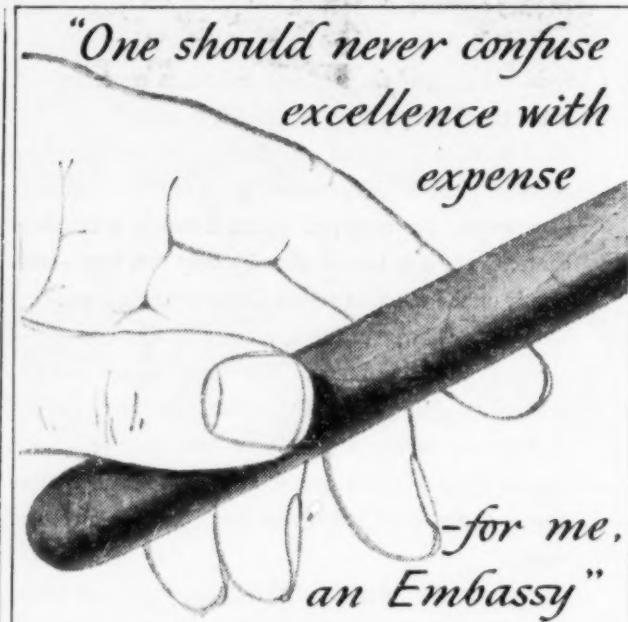
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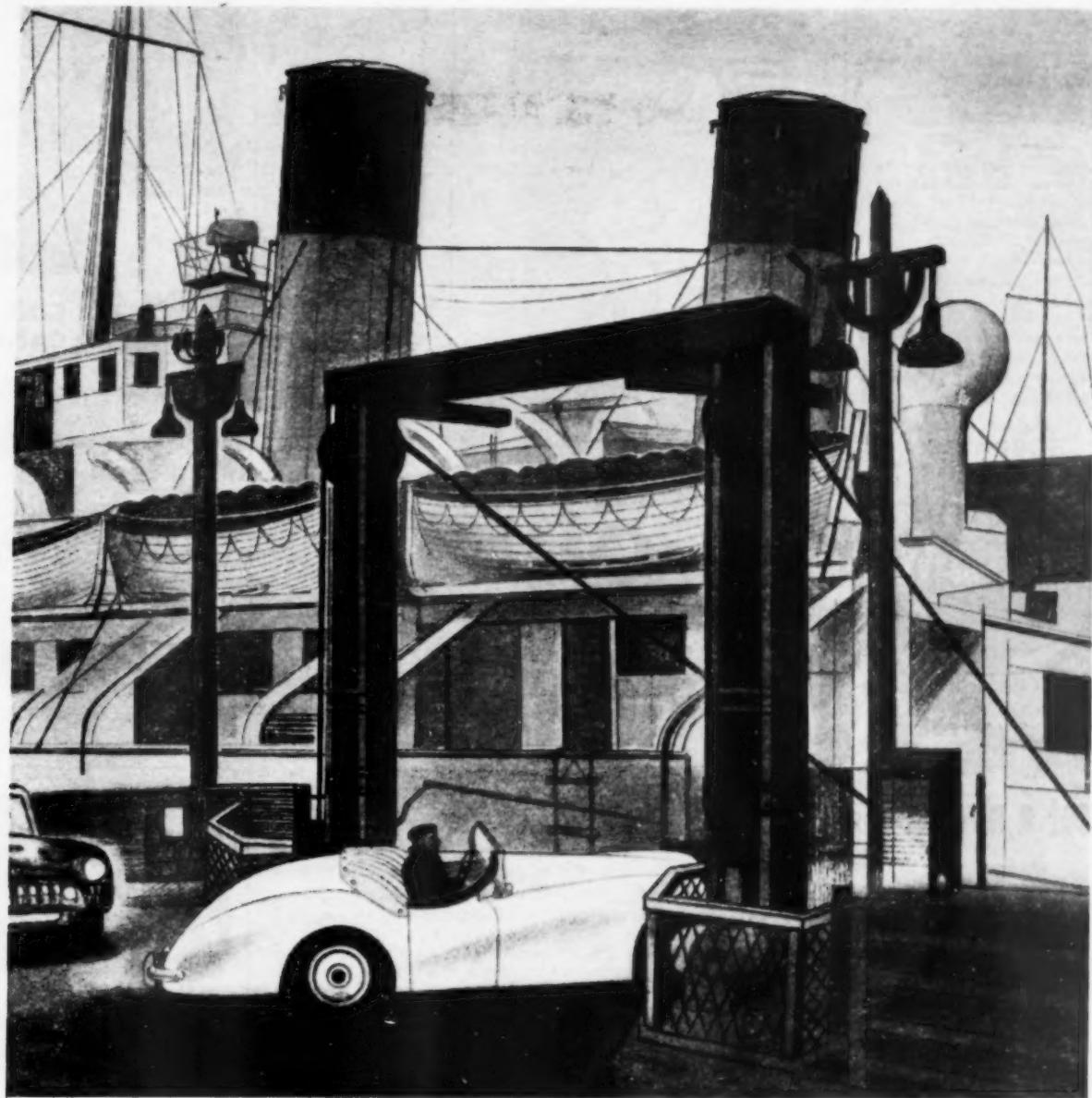


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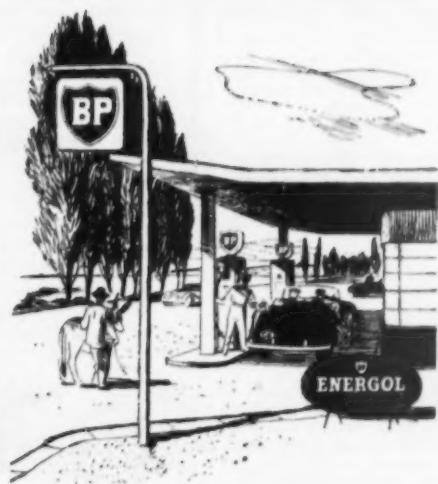
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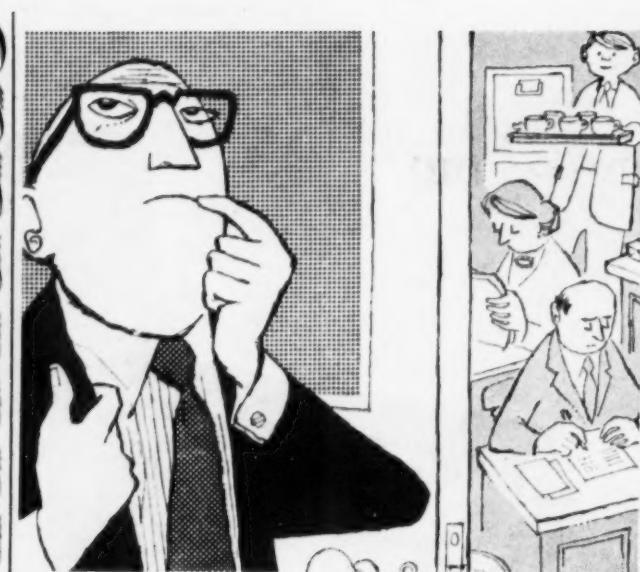
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QUIZ

FOR BUSINESSMEN WITH LOW E.Q.s* IN THEIR OFFICES

*Efficiency Quotients

THESE questions are intended to help business heads (1) who worry from time to time about their offices—whether all the necessary things really get done, and need it take quite so long as old Smithson says? (2) who simply don't dare think about all that.

1 If you suddenly ask for some figures more recent than the quarter before last, do you gather (1) that you're an unreasonable tyrant? (2) that an estimate *might* be produced—wouldn't that do? (3) that the figures *could* be got out, "but it means dropping everything else"?

Hint 1. By using the right machines for routine operations, statistics and summaries are produced as an automatic by-product available at any time—daily, if you like.

2 Is every weekly, monthly or periodical requirement—making up the payroll, statements, stock records, sales ledger—treated by your staff (1) as a kind of desperate D-Day, so that life is a permanent crisis with overtime peaks? Or (2) as something that's bound to be a bit late anyway—except, of course, the payroll?

Hint 2. Peaks disappear like magic, work flows evenly and punctually, when you install a Burroughs "Sensimatic" Accounting Machine, which can be switched instantly to any job.

3 What do you do about all the paper that accumulates? (1) File everything and patiently buy more shelves and cabinets till you have whole rooms full of inaccessible paper? (2) Keep out any documents you think you may want, rather than risk "the system"? (3) Have a large and really efficient filing staff—at heavy cost?

Hint 3. With Burroughs Microfilming Equipment you not only cut storage space by 99%, but make it easy to operate a really accessible, labour-saving system by which you can refer to any document within 60 seconds.

ANY POINTS?

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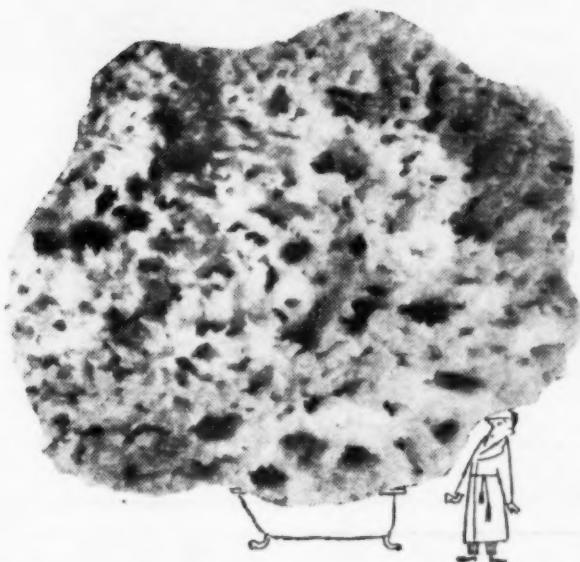
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that you throw out
the sponge



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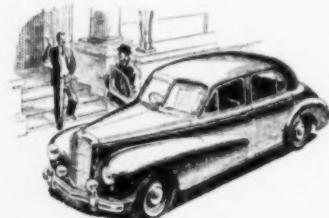


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